WALSALL
CHRONICLE

Thursday, January 31, 2013 | Read by more than 70,000 people | Price when sold 50p | mna media

Art of surprise

Another controversial artist in gallery display

See page 3

Bravo show

Comedian puts on an opera for his father

What's On – page 26

Saddlers woe

Defeat in Essex is a reality check for club

Sport – pages 47 & 48

ANGER AT FEE TO USE STATION LOO

THE decision to charge shoppers and workers 20p to use toilets at the Walsall's main bus station has come under fire. The controversial new charge will be introduced following an £80,000 revamp.

It comes as roadworks are carried out at the bus station this week, meaning disruption for thousands of passengers.

Councillor Pete Smith, Democratic Labour member for Blakenall, branded the charge a scandal.

"Over the last couple of days, town centre users have been 'plaiting their legs' as they found the toilets in the town centre bus station closed," he said.

"After a few complaints I received, I made inquiries only to discover that the toilets will open shortly with turnstiles, whereby users will have to pay 20p to use the bus station toilets.

"There are no council-owned and run toilets anymore in Walsall town centre which is bad enough. Now for people to be charged to use toilets in Walsall's main bus station is scandalous."

The issue is also due to be raised by members of the Walsall Pensioner's Convention at its meeting tomorrow (Friday).

Secretary of the branch Richard Worrall said: "I don't like it from an older person's point of view. It will have an impact.In the fullness of time every bus station will have a charge."

Christine Statham, aged 65, of Millfield Avenue, Bloxwich, said the town is already lacking in public toilets, with people having to face longer walks to conveniences.

She said:"You either have to walk up to the Old Square Shopping Centre to use the toilets or go into shops that have toilets, but I don't know how happy the shops

Report by Catherine Dalton & Craig Hughes

would be about that. It's a long way to walk, especially if you're at the bus station or just changing buses.

"Those bus station toilets are used by quite a lot of people too."

Using the toilets at the town's bus station is currently free but transport chiefs insist the new charge will bring it into line with other revamped facilities in the Black Country.

Pete Cameron, spokesman for Centro, said: "Following an £80,000 refurbishment of the toilets at Walsall bus station to vastly improve the facilities and comfort for passengers, a 20p charge will be introduced in line with that at other upgraded facilities at Wolverhampton and Stourbridge bus stations."

The news comes just weeks after Walsall Council revealed it plans to close six public toilets in Pelsall, Rushall, Willenhall, Aldridge, Brownhills and Blakenall Heath under plans to save £120,000.

Meanwhile, since Monday some passengers are being diverted to other stands at the bus station after roadworks forced some to be closed for up to a week.

Plan to park on verges

A £250,000 plan to convert grass verges into residential parking bays will ease congestion in Walsall, highways bosses say.

The scheme put forward by Walsall Council will tackle parking problems across the borough over the next 12 months.

Locations are still to be finalised but it is anticipated up to a dozen sites will be created. More cash is likely to be allocated in the years to follow as part of the initiative.

Transport chief Councillor Tom Ansell said: "We're looking to construct new car parking spaces in residential areas. We accept that, in some areas, there simply aren't enough spaces for everyone.

Issues

"This funding will help us to turn some areas of grass verges into parking spaces.

"These would be small plots where around half a dozen spaces would be created and will hopefully alleviate the issues of congestion and parking problems that residents frequently tell us about."

It comes as council chiefs have been reviewing all car parking in the town. The authority has introduced reduced charges in a bid to attract more shoppers. Some on-street fees have been scrapped for the first two hours.

Foundry hit by downturn

CHAMBERLIN, the Walsall-based foundry and engineering group, has warned this week that its profits have been hit by the economic slowdown.

Chamberlin employs 437, including 144 at the Chamberlin & Hill foundry in Walsall and another 70 at Exidor in Cannock.

Troubles are understood to centre on the group's foundry operations. Customers have cut back on their orders or put them back to a later date, the company said.

Oyez! Town crier secrets revealed

Town crier Cyril Richardson prepares for his history talk at Walsall Museum

THE role of the town crier through history will be the topic of a talk at Walsall Museum by Walsall's very own crier Cyril Richardson.

Mr Richardson took up the ceremonial role more than 20 years ago and will speak about his experiences at the event beind held at the Lichfield Street venue.

The 83-year-old is Walsall's unofficial town crier and will give the talk on Tuesday, February 5. from 2pm.

Former Sandwell College lecturer Mr Richardson has been a crier since the 1990s.

Entertain

The role dates back hundreds, possibly thousands, of years with its origins stretching back to Ancient Greece, through to the modern day revival.

Oyez, oyez, oyez (meaning "hark" or "listen") became a familiar call in town squares and markets all over Britain, a summons for townspeople to gather and listen to news of plague, victories in far off lands, royal births and deaths by execution. They became so important that harming a town crier was a treasonable offence

"There are 200 of us around the country at least," said Mr Richardson.

"It was very popular during the 1800s."

He added: "I want to entertain people for an hour and let them know a bit more."

Tickets cost £1 and places can be booked by calling (01922 653116), or send an email to museum@walsall.gov.uk

Market at night returns

A NIGHT market will return to Walsall in March. The inaugural night market, held in October, designed to boost trade in the town centre, was hailed a big success.

Organisers have now revealed plans are forging ahead to stage a second night market with a date due to be announced for March. They are promising it will be bigger and better than the first.

The event is organised by Walsall Town Centre Champions, with support from Walsall Council.

Stalls offering crafts and cottage-style trades will be set up on The Bridge, in the town centre, using pitches from the day market.

Regular

Councillor Adrian Andrew, regeneration chief, said: "It's great news. We want to try and do something like this on a regular basis. The first one was very successful so, hopefully, the next one will be even better."

Hundreds of shoppers flocked to the first night market on October 25, when more than 55 traders set up stalls. Those who attended said it had given the town a "Covent Garden" feeling.

The idea of a night market was initially included in Walsall's failed bid to become a Mary Portas Pilot Town under the Government scheme.

Objections to cemetery

A PETITION against plans to create a £3 million private cemetery on farmland in Walsall has attracted more than 1,000 signatures.

The proposal to create the 4.3 hectare burial site in Aldridge Road has sparked objections from people living nearby and a public meeting was being held in Rushall last night (Wednesday).

Aamer Waheed, boss of Springhill Cemetery, has submitted the application.

A group called the Residents Against the Cemetery Campaign has been set up.

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CONTACT US

Got a story to tell or an event you want covered? The Chronicle and the Express & Star have a team of reporters covering Walsall:

Tom Mason: 01902 319466
tom.mason@expressandstar.co.uk
Charlotte Lilley: 01902 319490
charlotte.lilley@expressandstar.co.uk
Will Ackermann: 01384 353213
will.ackermann@expressandstar.co.uk
Catherine Dalton 01922 444313
catherine.dalton@expressandstar.co.uk
Craig Hughes 01922 444316
craig.hughes@expressandstar.co.uk
Lisa O'Brien 01922 444312
lisa.obrien@expressandstar.co.uk
Marion Brennan 01543 465302
marion.brennan@expressandstar.co.uk

Email your pictures to:
walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Sports: chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

Photographic: John Sambrooks
Tel: 01902 319431
Email j.sambrooks@expressandstar.co.uk

Advertising: Samantha Broad
Tel: 01543 465331
E-mail: s.broad@expressandstar.co.uk

Property: Marguerita Finnegan
Tel: 01543 465337
E-mail: marguerita.finnegan@expressandstar.co.uk

Motoring: Jayne La'Hiffe
Tel: 01543 465334
E-mail: j.lahiffe@expressandstar.co.uk

Distribution: Paul Jones
Tel: 01902 319537
E-mail: p.jones@expressandstar.co.uk

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Queen Street
Wolverhampton
WV1 1ES
Open Monday to Friday 9am-1pm and 2pm-5pm
www.walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Praise for success of pupils and teachers

EDUCATION bosses in Walsall leapt to the defence of secondary schools after the borough slipped down the league tables.

Walsall fell eight places down the national rankings to 113 out of 151. But education boss Councillor Rachel Andrew was full of praise for pupils and teachers in Walsall.

She said the tables show performance at GCSE level still represented a rise over the past five years, higher than the national average.

"It is important that we pause to celebrate the successes of our young people and the teachers and support staff that have helped them," she said. "It is also important to recognise that we have work to do to ensure all children and young people in Walsall have the very best chance of achieving the very best results. We will support them in pursuing their ambitions."

The tables did show that the percentage of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate in Walsall in 2012 rose two per cent on the previous year, narrowing the gap from the national average to four per cent. The Baccalaureate level is a measure of how many pupils have secured a C grade or better across the core academic subjects of English, mathematics, history or geography, the sciences and a language.

Hydesville Tower School was named top performer as all of its students gained five A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent.Queen Mary's Grammar School was second for its GCSE students and first for its performance at A-level, based on its points score per candidate.

Borough schools are falling behind

EDUCATION in Walsall was dealt a further blow as the borough finds itself slumping down the national league as tens of thousands of teenagers left schools with worse GCSE results than those the year before.

The tables show Walsall dropped eight places down the national list. The overall percentage of pupils gaining 5 A*-C grades at GCSE of equivalent fell from 56.3 per cent to 55.9 per cent.

It comes after the borough's primary performed badly in the Key Stage 2 SATs primary school league tables last month.

Walsall was identified as one of the worst performing local authorities in the country, according to the Government data.

It fell from 77 to 147 position. There are only a total of 152 local authorities.

Council leader Mike Bird today said it was "disappointing" but the council was aware of the problem and working to improve the borough's schools.

The authority has already agreed to ended its contract with education provider, Serco.

Destiny

"It is a problem we have had for some continued time," he said.

"With us taking control of education we have to accept the fact many of these schools in Walsall are academies and in control of their own destiny.

"We do have some excellent schools in Walsall."

Councillor Rachel Andrew, the borough's education boss, also admitted there was work to do, saying students needed support in "pursuing their ambitions"

But she congratulated pupils and staff for their efforts.

Wolverhampton and Dudley recorded worsening GCSE results but Sandwell and Staffordshire recorded better results.

Help to set up business aged 50 plus

A NATIONAL charity is aiming to help the over-50s in Walsall back into work.

The Prince's Initiative is holding workshops offering advice to help mature workers develop business skills.

Delivered over six to eight weeks, including three classroom days, the course takes the over-50s through the process of setting up their own business.

The course started last week at 14a Lower Hall Lane, Walsall, WS1 1RL and is free to attend.

Storm

Labour market statistics show there are currently 33,000 people aged 50 to 64 unemployed in Walsall.

Nick Bunting, chief executive of the Prince's Initiative, said: "Mature workers face a perfect storm of longer working lives, a pensions' crisis, economic downturn and the uphill struggle to find employment."

See the website www.prime.org.uk/courses or call 0845 862 2023.

Aldridge students celebrate

Aldridge School pupils, Sam Parkes, Olivia Platt, Rachael Kirby and Gemma Smith

STUDENTS and staff at Aldridge School were celebrating after being named among the best performers in the borough for GCSEs and A-levels results. The school ranked sixth for its A-level results and seventh for its GCSEs, according to new league tables.

Headteacher David Mountney said: "We are extremely pleased with the results in the league tables particularly hot-on-the-heels of our most recent Ofsted, which clearly recognised the significant changes and improvements we have made.

"Staff and pupils are very proud of their school and the tables give them another reason to feel confident in the quality of teaching and care they receive at Aldridge School."

MP Vaz tells Parliament fit for work test failing

A WALSALL MP has criticised the work capability assessment (WCA), run by French-based firm Atos for the Government.

Valerie Vaz, Labour MP for Walsall South, told the House of Commons that some of her constituents are being declared fit for work despite medical evidence suggesting otherwise.

She said: "SD (name withheld) has cancer and is undergoing radiotherapy. She has been declared fit for work.

"SH suffered seven strokes and suffers from Type 2 Diabetes and a liver condition. She has had to appeal her decision.

"SA suffered a stroke and is blind but he has still been declared fit for work.

"LM has arthritis of the spine and has had to appeal his decision.

Dignity

"There is no common sense with these assessments. There is no humanity and no dignity for the most vulnerable in our society.

"I urge the Minister to listen to those who have to undergo these assessments and instruct Atos to start again."

The WCA is a computer-based assessment that determines who is eligible for sickness benefits.

At their annual conference GPs voted unanimously for it to be scrapped and replaced.

Atos Healthcare was awarded the Department for Work and Pensions contract in 2005. It has since been extended to 2015.

More homes to get fast broadband

AN EXTRA 21,000 homes and businesses in Willenhall and Wolverhampton are to get high-speed fibre broadband in the next few weeks as a result of BT's £2.5 billion improved network.

John Dovey, BT's regional director for the West Midlands, said: "BT's fibre network is expanding rapidly across the region bringing a boost for local economies wherever it goes.

"Research suggests that within 15 years fibre broadband could bolster the economy of a typical town by £143m and create 225 new jobs."

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Mother shot ex-partner then killed herself

Clare Sly, aged 39

MOTHER-OF-THREE Clare Sly shot her violent ex-partner with a sawn-off shotgun and then killed herself after suffering up to 25 years of abuse, an inquest heard.

The 39-year-old had been bombarded with more than 160 text messages in less than 24 hours from Derrick Vassell before their bodies were discovered at her Walsall home.

She used the double-barrel shotgun to shoot her former partner in the chest and head. Then she pulled the trigger on herself in Laneside Gardens, Birchills, on June 8.

An inquest at Smethwick Coroner's Court on Friday was told the couple were separated but the court heard the 43-year-old had parked near her address on June 7 and waited outside for more than 12 hours. He was allowed inside at around 1.30am.

Gun

The couple's eldest son, Anthony, was in another room and said in a statement to police that he heard loud bangs.

His mother then came into the kitchen holding the gun and said: "I have got to do it to myself."

Mr Vassell was found downstairs with forensic experts believing he had been shot from the stairs at a maximum of 4ft away. Miss Sly was discovered in an upstairs bedroom with a single shotgun wound to the chest.

Both died as a result of the chest injuries.

The inquest was told Mr Vassell, of Penkridge Street, Walsall, had a history of criminal offending including robbery, wounding and assault.

In his statement, Anthony, who was 23 at the time, said his mother, a teaching assistant, told him she was 13 when the violence started.

The most recent occasion of domestic violence had been in the April.

Black Country Coroner Robin Balmain said a verdict of unlawful killing was not suitable.

He recorded a verdict of death due to being shot in the course of a domestic incident.

He said it was "abundantly obvious" Miss Sly had shot herself.

Mr Balmain said: "He (Mr Vassell) seemed to me to be a controlling person who she clearly lived in fear of. I regard the barrage, the unrelenting barrage of texts, he sent to be potentially threatening and somewhat sinister.

"She sends a text shortly before these deaths occur saying enough was enough."

Reprieve for dog that bit a meter man

A DOG owner whose pet bit a meter reader in the thigh has avoided being served with a court order that would have compelled him have the animal destroyed.

The Staffordshire bull terrier cross – name Zuki – ran at Christopher Walters after he called at a family home in Shepnall Green, Willenhall, last November.

As 21-year-old Jake Withers led the way to the electricity meter at the front of the house, the dog dashed past and attacked the visitor on the path outside.

'Boisterous'

Pc Russell Martin, of the West Midlands Police dog unit, said Mr Walter was bitten on the upper thigh.

The wound was minor but caused the victime a great deal of pain.

Withers told Walsall Magistrates Court last week that Zuki had not attacked anyone before.

"She's boisterous but she's never been a problem," he said.

Pc Martin said the victim Mr Walters did not want to bring charges against the owner.

But District Judge Michael Morris said the dog had acted dangerously and he was considering a destruction order.

However, Withers agreed to an order to keep the dog under control.

These included conditions that the animal is muzzled and on a secure lead when in public.

The dog must also be on a lead in a room other than the hallway if anyone calls at the door in future .

Mayor attends memorial event

MEMORIAL events took place across the borough and the country to honour those who died in the Holocaust.

In Walsall a memorial service was held at the Council House with the Mayor councillor Dennis Anson and Chief Inspector Mike O'Hara among those attending.

Walsall Multi Faith Forum organised the hour-long event at 11.55am for Holocaust Memorial Day.

Cllr Anson said it was an opportunity to "commemorate victims and survivors" of the Second World War Holocaust as well as reflect on other atrocities worldwide.

Millions of people, the majority of them Jews, died in the Nazi deaths camps and as a result of Hitler's racist policies in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Hospital death rate review is under way

AN INDEPENDENT review into death rates at Walsall Manor Hospital has begun and its findings will be revealed in the spring.

The investigation was commissioned by borough council chiefs after the Pleck Road hospital recorded higher mortality rates than other comparable hospitals.

Hospital bosses vowed to tackle the issue and an action plan was drawn up – but the council decided that it wanted an independent report in a bid to reassure residents.

Mott MacDonald is carrying out the review and will examine data and records from April 2011 to the present, with the co-operaton of health bosses.

It was to be discussed by the council's health scrutiny and performance panel this week.

Senior

The councillors were being told that the review team expected to engage directly with board level clinicians and senior management in all the key agencies.

The findings will be presented to the panel in April.

The Doctor Foster Hospital Guide last month revealed Walsall Manor had a standardised mortality rate of 117 between April 2011 and March 2012, the expected level would be 100.

The trust's chief executive Richard Kirby insisted steps had been taken to help lower death rates. This included investment in staff and improved end-of-life care.

He said £800,000 had been invested into nursing staff – the equivalent of 41 extra posts – over the past two years, whilst eight new medical consultants are to be taken on by April.

The rate reduced to 92 between April and August last year, he explained.

Bin backlog to be cleared

EXTRA binmen have been out this week in Walsall clearing the backlog of waste left due snow and ice.

Some bins had not been collected for two weeks due the conditions on the borough's minor roads. In some areas bins and bags of rubbish were left to pile up.

Council environment chief Tom Ansell said: "There will be extra staff out there to clear the backlog. It was purely the weather. Our men worked a miracle to do what they did.

Rounds

"They worked in adverse conditions and still managed to more than 45 to 50 per cent of rounds a day."

The council website says that bin services will operate as normal and additional resources would be assigned to clear any backlog from missed collections this week. It added: "It is envisaged that all work will be recovered each day throughout the week without further disruption."

Facing a challenge at new exhibition

Walsall New Art Gallery assistant David Jordan looks at artist Jochem Hendricks' self-portrait at the heart of a 'provocative' new exhbition

A COLLECTION of stuffed dogs is among the pieces of work in the latest controversial exhibition to go on show at The New Art Gallery Walsall.

Works by German artist Jochem Hendricks are now on display at the Gallery Square venue until April 7.

Described as "playful, challenging and provocative", pieces by the artist includes a golden-faced 'avatar' sculpture of himself.

His works have included making a synthetic diamond out of the amputed leg of a footballer and commissioning a team of African women to glue together 25 miles of human hair.

Terrorist

He has also made an artwork out of stolen items and worked on an art project with photographer and revolutionary Magdalena Kopp, first wife of terrorist Carlos the Jackal.

Perhaps most controversially in an age of austerity, he has funded an extravagant 'lifestyle' for a replica of his body by using money that he would otherwise have paid in tax in Germany, using an art materials loophole.

He will be at the New Art Gallery on March 16 at 2pm to talk about his work and lead people on an informal tour of his exhibition. To book a free place on the tour, call 01922 654400.

The current exhibition by British artist Damien Hirst, also well known for his shock tactics, has been a big success at the gallery.

NEWS in brief

A fast London rail link for the borough

A NEW train service between Walsall and London would be introduced as part of the controversial £32billion high-speed rail project.

The project to boost business will provide 225mph trains between Birmingham and London. New stations would be built for Birmingham, one in the city centre and one near the airport.

News of extra services in the Black Country came ahead of Monday's announcement of the preferred route for HS2. That will see trains run north from Birmingham near Lichfield before passing villages such as Little Haywood near Rugeley. It will then head east of Stafford before going north towards Stoke-on-Trent.

Engineering open evening at school

A SPECIALIST engineering school in Bloxwich will hold an open evening tonight (Thursday).

Anyone interested in studying at the Black Country University Technical College, in year 10 or sixth form, can attend the venue for the event between 6pm and 8pm.

Call 01922 470763 for more information.

Art is at the heart of Valentine's Day

VISITORS to Walsall's New Art Gallery can get their heart rates checked and make a Valentine's Day card during a Love Your Heart Day event.

The event will be held on Saturday, February 9, and people can drop-in between non and 4pm.

Family cycle ride from Clayhanger

A WALSALL cycling group's family cycle ride on Saturday is starting from Holy Trinity School, Clayhanger, at 9.30am, for a distance of eight to 12 miles depending on weather conditions. Contact Dave on 07866028154 for details. Under 16s must be accompanied by an adult.

Rambling 10 miles

THE Walsall Group of the Ramblers will be heading to Prees near Wem, in north Shropshire, on Sunday for a 10 mile walk.

For details call (01922) 614389 or (01922) 685271.

College Shack is one

THE WACC Shack, Walsall Adult and Community College's Saddlers shopping centre store to signpost learning opportunities, is a year old.

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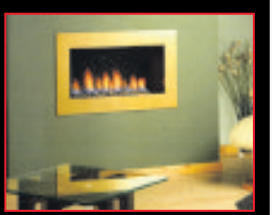

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NEWS

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

SO THAT'S it. In clear, concise language that no-one could possibly misunderstand, the die is cast. The British people will be given a simple, straightforward choice on our future membership of the EU. It is in or out. Or possibly innish or outish. Sort of. A bit. Depending . . .

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

THE reality is that David Cameron is standing on the quayside, urging us to step aboard the good ship EU which, even as he talks, is casting off and moving away from us. By the time we get this promised referendum the Eurozone nations at the heart of today's EU will have become a superstate, in effect one nation with one central bank and one economic policy. Simply by standing still, the UK will move away. David Cameron, if he is still PM, will then proudly announce that he has negotiated a new relationship with Brussels and a grateful nation will vote to stay in (even though we will actually be out).

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

DURING the wintry spell cars, vans, lorries and the eBay courier, gawd bless him, all managed to get up the farm track to Chateau Rhodes. But the Royal Mail didn't. I am reminded of the graffiti in a post office in New York. On the wall a famous inscription in praise of postal workers declares: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." Underneath, someone wrote: "So what is it, then?"

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

WHITEHALL decrees that all children must be taught about the First World War. I can just imagine the government-approved curriculum for the1914-18 conflict: mud, blood, poison gas, lions led by donkeys, Wilfred Owen, pointless sacrifice and let's not offend the Germans. From the 1930s onwards our view of the war as the needless, thoughtless slaughter of a generation at the hands of incompetent generals has been shaped by war poets, pacifists and the bleak, mocking satire of Oh, What a Lovely War! and Blackadder.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

MORE telly anachronisms. A reader claims that in the excellent drama Spies of Warsaw (BBC4) David Tennant was driving a version of the classic Citroen Light 15 which was not produced until well after the war. Mind you, this seems a small niggle, bearing in mind that not so long ago we saw David Tennant arriving in ancient Pompeii in a 1950s police telephone box.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

A HARVARD professor, George Church, is looking for an "adventurous" woman to give birth to a baby Neanderthal, assuming he can create the DNA of our long-extinct relative. I bet the queue is already forming. The eagerness of some women to become Jurassic Park-style surrogates is astonishing. In 1991, the frozen body of a man who died 5,300 years ago was found amazingly well preserved in the Alps. Rumour spread that Otzi, as he is known, contained fertile semen. Scientists were bombarded with requests from women eager to conceive a prehistoric baby. Maybe these ladies want to be famous. Or maybe they are just fed up with modern blokes.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

I HAD to read this letter a few times. A reader cheerfully recalls his schooldays: "I won an award for my punctuation. They gave me a posh trophy."

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

MP calling for look at funding of cancer drugs

WALSALL South MP Valerie Vaz has backed an assessment on the benefits of the Cancer Drugs Fund.

The Health Select Committee has published its report for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (Nice).

It found that decisions were needed urgently on the Government's new drugs pricing regime and an assessment of the outcomes for patients.

The Labour MP, who sits on the committee, said: "One of the committee's key findings is that there needs to be a proper assessment of what benefits the Cancer Drugs Fund has brought, with those benefits being applied to the treatment of other conditions – as well as providing a clear mechanism for the future funding of treatment for patients whose drugs have been paid for from the Cancer Drugs Fund."

"There is uncertainty about the implications of the changes proposed for the Cancer Drugs Fund, which was introduced by the Government in 2011 to allow clinicians to use drugs that had not been approved by Nice, and which will be superseded by the value-based pricing system."

Tax disc check led to heroin discovery

A WILLENHALL man caught with heroin and crack cocaine – after being stopped him for having the wrong tax disc on his car – was jailed for 40 months after admitting two charges of possessing controlled drugs with intent to supply.

Warren Morris also admitted fraudulent use of an excise licence.

Tom Walking, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court that the 22 year-old's car was in High Street, Pelsall, with a tax disc for another vehicle.

At the police station, Morris was seen to drop two wraps which contained crack cocaine and, when searched, was found to have a further 12 wraps containing cocaine and heroin.

Habit

Morris, of Gomer Street, told officers he had been addicted to both drugs for some three years and would have sold some to finance his own habit.

Christopher O'Gorman, defending, said the dealing did not fund a lavish lifestyle.

Recorder Michael Burrows QC jailed Morris for 40 months.

Store in offer to support groups

A SHOP in Walsall town centre is offering to help community groups and charities in the area.

Wilkinson, in the Quasar Centre, is appealing for anyone passionate about their community to apply for a donation. People can apply for a cash donation, products or workers who can volunteer their time.

Andy Sperring, store manager, said: "The Helping Hands scheme is an initiative where funding is provided to support local projects. As a company it's great to be able to help local community groups and charities by giving something back to the area. Whether it's seeds to help a community garden bloom or paint for a local animal shelter, we are able to help."

Application forms can be collected from the store and, once completed, should be returned to the help desk.

Traders angry at plan for rent rise

SCORES of traders have objected to plans to increase rent for pitches at Walsall Market.

More than 20 complaints have been made by stallholders about the rise being proposed by cash-strapped Walsall Council. The £5-a-day hike will make an extra £100,000 a year for the council.

It will only apply to Walsall town centre stalls and comes as a permanent new home is being planned for the historic market in the town centre.

Market Traders' Association chairman Tony Larner said stallholders were angry about the proposed hike.

"It is not the right time to do increases," he said. "It is another nail in the coffin as times are really tough.

" There are a lot of people who are unhappy about it."

A report to the council stated: "Average stall take-up at Walsall Market is 78 per cent, but this is not the case at Bloxwich and Willenhall markets where it is acknowledged that trading performance is more challenged. Further pressures on the viability of those markets, such as a rent increase, could have a particularly adverse impact on the sustainability of those centres. Therefore, the increase in market stall rents is restricted to Walsall Market only, reflecting its relative health.

by Craig Hughes

Delayed

"Stall rents have not increased since 2009 and have been delayed as long as possible, but are consistent with a rise in charges for other council services.

"A £5 increase will take the maximum daily stall rent on Walsall Market to £40, dependent on trading day and stall location."

It emerged last week that the market could trade for an extra day each week to help raise part of the £1.1 million investment that a new location would involve.

Experts believe it should permanently relocated at The Bridge and Bradford Street.

Coach firm donations

STAFF at bus and coach company National Express have raised £450 to help charities and a community sports group.

Kerry Halfacre, Richard Harrison and Craig Worrall all work out of the company's Walsall garage and secured the funding from the company's employee charity panel.

Kerry's share went to Children in Need, Richard's to the Dogs Trust animal charity, and Craig's went to Wombourne Olympic, a children's football club .

Movies magic for Ian

Ian Edwards pictured at his film memorabilia exhibition- being held at Walsall Museum, Lichfield Street

HE has been a keen film fan since his teens and now Ian Edwards's collection of movie memorabilia, dating back more than a century, has gone on display at Walsall Museum.

Mr Edwards has spent 35 years building up a selection of cine reels, schedules and posters. The 49-year-old has been a fan of the silver screen since he discovered the joy of spending a Saturday afternoon at the flicks as a child. In his mid-teens he bought his first cine projector, sparking a lifelong interest which has cost up to £30,000 so far.

He now has more than 400 movie reels, ranging from early Disney cartoon classic Steamboat Willie from the 1920s to great musicals such as Singin' in the Rain.

Mr Edwards, from Bloxwich, has around 40 projectors These range from a Bing model dating back to the 1890s to a Chinon which worth up to £700 in the 1980s. His collection includes a filming schedule for Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – and cinema seats rescued from Walsall's old ABC on Park Street.

The display can be seen in Walsall Museum's Your Corner display area until Saturday, February 2.

Fashion show helping fund a 'CyberKnife'

AN EVENING of fashion is being organised by Brownhills Townswomen's Guild to raise money for a hi-tech piece of equipment for Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Bargains will be on offer at the event on March 7 at Brownhills Memorial Hall, Lichfield Road, from 7pm.

First

Money raised will go to the hospital's CyberKnife campaign.

The CyberKnife would provide precision radiotherapy treatment to cancer patients across the Midlands and would be the first of its kind in the UK.

Tickets are £2.50 each, available by calling Mrs Astrid van der Burgt on 07900 267366 or Mary Hayton on 01543 360890.

Bungalows get the green light

THREE bungalows will be built on land in Aldridge after proposals were give the go-ahead by Walsall Council planners.

The four-bedroom properties are being earmarked for a site in Erdington Road.

The site was previously used as a garden.

Closure of public loos supported

THE closure of public toilets in Walsall will have a "small" impact on the community, say council chiefs.

Concerns were expressed over proposals to close toilets, in an effort to save £120,000 a year. But following a period of consultation, bosses at Walsall Council say there has been "significant support" for the move.

The council has to make £13 million cuts, and six public toilets will close, to save on cleaning and maintenance costs, in Pelsall, Rushall, Willenhall, Aldridge, Brownhills and Blakenall Heath.

A report to the council stated: "There is a requirement for the council to make revenue savings and the closure of the public conveniences is part of these savings, resulting in a saving of £120,000.

Neglect

"There appears to be significant support for the closures, although there were a number who are concerned about the effect this would have on older people, the disabled and those with young children.

"Many of the toilets are in poor condition and substantial investment is required, but there is no funding to bring them up to standard.

"Unfortunately, this has created an atmosphere of neglect, discouraging public use for the purposes intended and attracting anti-social behaviour. This in turn increases maintenance costs.

"The facilities at Rushall and Brownhills have been temporarily closed since early October and there have been no complaints."

Bridge for pedestrians

PLANS to preserve an historic bridge in Pelsall whilst building a new road bridge next to it have been approved. Council bosses gave the green light to the scheme for Pelsall's York Bridge last week.

Transport chief Councillor Tom Ansell said the current 1800s structure is becoming unstable and would soon not be fit for traffic. But the landmark bridge in Norton Road could be used by pedestrians only in the future.

A consultation period over the scheme, which will see parts of Pelsall North Common used, will be carried out from next month.

Bid to transform baths into functions venue

Willenhall Leisure Centre before it closed

THE landmark Willenhall Leisure Centre building, formerly known as Willenhall Baths, which shut amid controversial council cuts, could be brought back into use as banquets and conference centre under new plans.

The venue was closed in 2010 by council bosses to save money. It was bought at auction the following year.

New owner Raj Kumar has unveiled plans to refurbish the building in Bath Street in a move that would create 40 jobs.

The 56-year-old, of Birmingham, said: "It's a fantastic site. I want to bring it back into use. It's sad it's been left to go into the condition it's in. I want to liven it up. It will create jobs in roles like waiting, cleaning and office staff."

Extension

Under the plans, the building would be refurbished and its boiler rooms and changing rooms would be demolished to make way for an extension.

Permission is being sought to open the facility seven days a week from 10am to 2am to allow flexibility for bookings, although most functions would take place at a weekend.

It is expected to create 10 full-time and 30 part-time positions and would be open to bookings from the community and businesses.

Willenhall South Councillor Sean Coughlan said: "We have always hoped the private sector would come in to reopen it as a leisure centre but we need to make the most of the empty buildings we have got."

The centre was closed in 2010 despite a campaign to save it.

The application for it to be revived has been submitted to Walsall Council and a decision will be made at a later date.

Developer pulls out of new business park

THE preferred developer for a business park creating hundreds of jobs in Walsall has pulled out of the multi-million pound scheme.

The revamp of the former James Bridge copperworks site is a key element of the town's enterprise zone.

Parkhill Estates had been lined up to reclaim and regenerate the site. But it has emerged that negotiations have now ceased.

Bosses at Walsall Council insisted the scheme for the 37-acre site is still on track, with a report on the best way of creating a thriving business park on the land due to be considered by the authority in March.

But Labour group leader Tim Oliver said it was a surprising development and bad news for the area.

He said: "We need to know why it has apparently fallen apart at the seams and what is going to happen in its place."

Option

The copper works site is owned by the Homes and Communities Agency, which is working alongside the council.

One option could be for reclamation to be undertaken by the authority and development then delivered through the private sector.

The land is one of 15 parcels making up the enterprise zone, which it is hoped will bring up to 4,000 jobs.

Regeneration boss Councillor Adrian Andrew said: "We continue to be deeply committed to turning the Phoenix 10 site into a place that provides new jobs and are grateful for the interest that Parkhill showed in the site. However we now need to quickly move the project forward."

Government help to fund new homes

A TOTAL of 146 homes will be created in Walsall thanks to a £2.2 million Government cash boost.

Work is expected to start on five patches of land in February and March.

Walsall Housing Group has secured the cash from the Homes and Communities Agency.

It is hoped it would go some way to addressing the need for more affordable homes in the borough.

Homes will be built at Barracks Lane in Blakenall, Fisher Road in Mossley,Curtin Drive in Moxley, Whateley Road in Ryecroft and Sprout Lane in Caldmore.

The biggest of the sites is Barracks Lane where the housing group is building 73 affordable homes in partnership with Galliford Try.

Blakenall's Councillor Pete Smith said: "The more brownfield sites that are regenerated the better.

"There is a really big housing need, particularly in this area."

Sit-down Zumba launches

Trying out the new Zumba Gold fun at Darlaston All Active are Sharon Felton, Karen Hough, Susan Frampton along with their Zumba instructor Scott James

NEW fitness classes aimed at helping older people live a healthier lifestyle are being launched at a community centre in Darlaston thanks to a £7,000 grant.

The cash has been given to Darlaston All Active Club, in Willenhall Road, by Awards For All to allow the club to run Zumba Gold classes, which can be done sitting down.

The funding has paid for PA equipment, safety mats and coaching costs to run the fitness project over 40 weeks.

The 45-minute sessions, led by Zumba instructor Scott James, will take place on Thursdays at 11am, starting from today, January 31.

Encourage

Project manager Sharon Felton explained the scheme, saying: "It is to encourage our older generation, whether they are disabled or not, to get motivated and have a healthier lifestyle.

"It can be done sitting down so it's low impact.

"It also gives people the chance to socialise and have fun."

Sessions in the first month will be free and then £2.50 a session.

Call 0121 568 6144 for further information or to book a place.

NEWS in brief

Maternity cash so partners can stay

MORE than £2 million will be spent on improving hospital maternity units across the region with Walsall Manor Hospital will get £157,000 to refurbish and improve its maternity facilities.

Government cash will be spent on a wide range of projects, such as new birthing pools, wet rooms, en-suite rooms and major refurbishments.

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust was given the money to build en-suite rooms and provide overnight accommodation for partners.

Garden to open again for charity

OWNERS of a garden in Bloxwich are planning to hold two open days this summer.

John and Julie Quinn will open their garden at 6, Fishley Close on May 26 and July 28, from 10am-4pm on both days.

The 33sq ft garden includes Japanese maples, water feature, oriental bridge and stone ornaments.

It has raised more than £10,000 for charities over several years.

Admission will be £3.

Road to close for gas work project

A ROAD closure will be in force for a 12-hour period in Willenhall on Sunday for gas works.

Willenhall Road will be closed at Bughole Bridge on February 3 between 6am and 6pm.

West Midlands Gas Alliance is carrying out the work on behalf of National Grid Gas.

Jobless number continues to fall

THE number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in Walsall fell again last month.

The total for the borough was down to 9,985 – or six per cent of the working population.

For the West Midlands as a whole, the total reduced by 1,604 to 157,048 or 4.4 per cent.

Poor weather led to cancelled dance

AN evening of ballroom dancing organised by Pelsall Kidney Machine and Research Committee to raise money for New Cross Hospital last weekend was cancelled due to icy weather. The was to take place at Wombourne Civic Centre.

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NEWS

Prison for driver who became a drug dealer

CANNABIS and amphetamines with a street value of more than £20,000 were found during a drugs bust on a Walsall house.

Lee Butler is starting an eight-month jail term for possession and drug dealing after Stafford Crown Court heard that the redundant delivery driver was enticed into dealing to pay off debts to loan sharks.

Officers searched his home on March 6 and discovered a sealed black bucket, which contained cannabis and two bags of amphetamine. The estimated street value of the amphetamine was between £15,000 and £19,000, while the cannabis was worth £3,620.

Also seized during the raid was £3,500 in cash and a mobile phone that contained drug-dealing text messages.

Supplying

Mr Paul Farrow, prosecuting, said the messages were from people either complaining about the quality of the drugs, or asking for more.

The Crown's case was that Butler was on the next level up in the dealer chain, supplying the street dealers.

The 39-year-old had claimed he was looking after the drugs for someone else.

Butler, of Weston Drive, admitted two charges of possessing drugs with intent to supply and was jailed for eight months.

Judge Michael Chambers told him: "Those who get involved in dealing on this scale cannot avoid an immediate custodial sentence."

Miss Sophie Lomas, defending, said Butler was working as a delivery driver supporting his wife and family when he was made redundant.

"He was laid off and he has struggled financially, borrowing money from an unwise source – a loan shark," she said.

"There has been problems in that respect, that's what led a man with no history of drug abuse to this situation," she added.

Retail chain success continues

"People shop for value," says Poundland chief executive Jim McCarthy

ECONOMIC slowdown and triple dip recession has not held back Willenhall-based retail chain Poundland's remarkable growth.

It opened 60 stores across the country in the last nine months and chief executive Jim McCarthy says its growth will continue through 2013 with at least another 50 stores in the pipeline.

Turnover for the current financial year is set to top £900 million and the chain, founded in 1990, is on course to open its 500th store and reach £1 billion in annual turnover by the end of March 2014.

Mr McCarthy, who has been in his post since 2006, said "savvy" shoppers were turning to Poundland for value for money."

Last year was another record sales year for Poundland and it created 2,000 new jobs with another 2,000 predicted for 2013, taking the total employed to 14,000.

Last year saw the opening of Poundland's flagship store at the Mander Centre in Wolverhampton. The former TK Maxx site at 13,000 sq ft is the chain's biggest. "Sales at the new store have exceeded our expectations," said Mr McCarthy.

NEWS

Addict jailed for burglary next door to his parents

A DRUG addict who raided the house of his parents' next door neighbour to fund his habit has been jailed for 17 months.

Craig Makin waited until the couple left their home of 44 years for a day out and smashed a back window of the property in Somerfield Road, Walsall.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that the 24-year-old stole a £1,400 haul of goods including two mobile phones, laptop computers, jewellery and a television on December 11.

Prosecutor Paul Spratt explained that blood found on the door knob of an upstairs room of the burgled property matched Makin's blood.

Desperate

He had previous convictions for three robberies and five burglaries, the court was told.

Stephen Cadwaladr, defending, said: "His parents live next door to the attacked premises. He realised they (the neighbours) were out, was desperate for drugs and broke in. He is an addict."

Makin from Broad Lane, Walsall, who has a two-year-old child and a pregnant partner, pleaded guilty to burglary.

He was sent to prison by Judge Rosalind Bush, who told him: "Some of the jewellery you stole was irreplaceable because of its sentimental value."

That's ASDA nice for pupils

ASDA's Cath Whitehouse with Grace Academy students Mervielles Djiala, Shamsa Othman and Maqsood Piprawala

PUPILS from a Darlaston school joined mystery shoppers as part of an 'on the job' training exercise. Year nine students from Grace Darling Academy put staff through their paces at ASDA in Solihull.

The 15 youngsters were joined by others from Grace academies in Solihull and Coventry.

Cath Whitehouse, community life colleague from ASDA in Darlaston was one of the team helping on the day. She said: "Students need customer service skills in all walks of life and whatever role they go for."

Keith Middleton, of Darlaston Town Centre Partnership, added: "It is very important that businesses get involved with their local schools."

Fit to avoid a fall

ELDERLY residents from Bloxwich are being encouraged to improve their fitness and gain confidence at the Active Steps club.

The project, with sessions held at Bloxwich Leisure Centre, is to help people who have suffered, or fear having, a fall. It introduces exercises that work on balance, strength, stamina, posture, mobility and co-ordination. For more information call 01922 658080.

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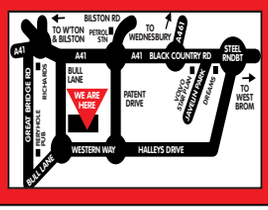

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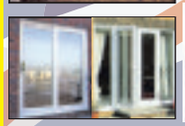

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GAS safe REGISTER

NEWS

Meals service now being put under the spotlight

SERVICES that replaced meals-on-wheels provided by Walsall Council will be put under the microscope to find out if they are offering enough support to residents.

by Lisa O'Brien

The authority ended its contract with meals-on-wheels provider Sodexo in January 2011 in a bid to save £1million over three years.

The £220,000 Taste for Life community meals scheme, run by Caldmore Housing and Age UK Walsall, was launched in response and is one of the services available. It delivers hot and frozen meals and hosts weekly luncheon clubs, amongst other services, and has 580 pensioners on its books.

Assurances

But the council's social care and inclusion scrutiny panel wants greater assurances that the new arrangements are working to the advantage of residents in Walsall.

Councillors are concerned that some people who have withdrawn from the alternative service are not being supported.

Councillor Rose Burley said there was not enough quantifiable information on numbers available."

Andy Rust, head of joint commissioning, said people had been advised about the new services but it was up to them to make decisions for themselves.

Chairman of the panel, Councillor Tim Oliver said: "This was a controversial issue for this committee and while we accept the theory, in terms of giving people more choice, how do we get the assurance we were right?

"We need to be presented with evidence through our officers that this new scheme is genuinely working in practice.

"We hear of the growth of food banks and food poverty, and need to be assured that this decision has not in any way added to such pressures amongst our pensioners and other vulnerable people across our borough."

The panel has asked for a report to be produced for its meeting in March.

Gym gets go-ahead

PLANS to turn an empty industrial unit in Bloxwich into a fitness facility have been given approval by council bosses

The application to convert the Modern Saddlery building, Leamore Lane, into a gym was put forward by Change ur Shape, formerly of Wednesbury. The company plans to spend around £20,000 on its refurbishment.

Nicola is pet protector

Nicola Dawes with PDSA pet protectors dog Osca

A WILLENHALL school girl has won a prestigious award from the PDSA for the second time for her work with sick and injured animals.

Fourteen-year-old Nicole Dawes was crowned PDSA Pet Protector of the Year of 2012, having already won it in 2010. The student of King Edward VI Five Ways School, is an active member of the charity's pet protectors scheme which teaches children about caring for pets.

She has held fundraising parties and sold cakes to raise more than £100 for the charity and donated thousands of items to PDSA's Wolverhampton store.

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NEWS

New homes to be built on vandal-plagued site

A £3.6 million development will see dozens of homes built on a vandal-hit site in Bloxwich, with work to start next month.

by Lisa O'Brien

A total of 37 new homes are earmarked for construction at a site in Fisher Road.

The scheme is part of Walsall Housing Group's major plans to provide around 255 homes by early 2014.

Contractor Willmott Dixon will build the 20 two-bedroom and 17 three-bedroom homes which will be available to rent. The first residents are due to move in from March 2014.

Mark Tranter, who is head of development at the housing association, said: "We know there is a strong need for more affordable homes in our area, and this scheme is one way we are looking to address that.

"We are committed to developing affordable housing to ensure people in need have access to quality homes.

"Following consultation events we have held with residents to discuss our plans, we know that local people are happy to be seeing the site, which has been derelict for a number of years, be developed into family homes."

Funding for the project has come from the Homes and Communities Agency and housing association.

Welcomed

Bloxwich West Councillor Fred Westley has welcomed the scheme. He said: "It's excellent for the area. This site has been derelict for a long time.

"It will be nice to see it being brought back into use. There's a few sites in the Mossley area which need redeveloping."

Run-down maisonettes and garages were demolished at the site in 2009 after they became a magnet for vandals.

Stories and memories

Activity co-ordinator Debbie Turner, centre, with residents Janet McGhee and Alice Smith

IT IS story-time for residents of a Walsall home who are enjoying forward to a special week devoted to telling tales.

Some of the stories at Mali Jenkins Residential Home will be taken from a book of reminiscences containing residents' own memories of growing up.

Among them are the recollections of 71-year-old Janet McGhee, who was raised in Wolverhampton during the Second World War. Activities co-ordinator Debbie Turner interviewed her about growing up in that era.

The home is putting on themed days for the event which concludes tomorrow (Friday).

Love is in the air at museum

ROMANTIC readings from authors ranging rrom Jane Austen to Jackie Collins will help set the mood for romance at a Valentine's Day event.

A performance of love poems will be held at Walsall Leather Museum on February 15. It will also feature love song lyrics. The performance, Quivers of Passion, will be given by Little Earthquake theatre company. People who book in advance can request their favourite poems or lyrics to be read and dedicated to loved ones during show, from 7.30pm. Call (01922) 721153 for further details.

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NEWS

NEWS in brief

Indoor boot sale for Saddlers Club

AN INDOOR car boot sale will be held at Walsall FC's Supporters Club next Saturday, February 9.

Items will be for sale at the venue, in Bescot Crescent, from 10am and entry costs 30p.Money raised will go to the Saddlers Club.

Big, medium and small tables are available costing £10, £7.50 or £5 and sellers should arrive from 9am. To book a table, call 01922 649840 or 01922 621179.

Dignity in action during afternoon

ACTIVITIES will be on offer at a community centre in Bloxwich to celebrate Dignity Action Day tomorrow afternoon (Friday).

The Stan Ball Centre will host bowling, bingo, karaoke, target games and seated exercise from 1pm to 3pm. Refreshments will be available.

Three homes are planned for site

THREE new homes are earmarked for a site on the edge of Walsall town centre, under plans submitted to the local authority. The development, consisting of two-bedroom homes, would be built on land in Cairns Street.

Forum meeting

RESIDENTS can raise concerns at High Heath and Shelfield Forum at Autumn Close Community Centre on Tuesday, 7.30pm.

Impression unveiled of cemetery meeting room

An artist's impression of meeting centre at Springhill Cemetery, near Muckley Corner

AN artist's impression has been released of the meeting room at what will be one of the largest cemeteries in the Midlands.

Work has started at Springhill Cemetery, off the A461 Walsall Road, near Muckley Corner.

The meeting centre will be used as the main reception and waiting area.

The 30,000-plot site, which will have one of the largest Muslim designated sections in the region, will also have a three-arm roundabout built by the entrance. Work on that is expected to start soon.

Recent snowfall has hampered progress by a week, but a timetable on eight months of roadworks to accommodate the scheme is now being finalised.

Kamran Saleem, sales and administration manager for the site said: "The roadworks are down to the council and they are still having to work out all the contractors and when they do the work will begin. But we have started work just by the road and on the site."

Once roadworks begin, motorists will face lane closures and a reduction in the speed limit from 60mph to 30mph along the road from its junction with Barracks Lane up to the busy island at Muckley Corner.

Safer

But bosses said while they understood it would cause disruption, they believed it would make the road safer in the long term.

The site was bought in 2004 for £680,000 by Springhill Cemetery Group and construction will cost up to £4 million.

More than 4,000 plots have already been snapped up at the site, which is due to open around June. Ten jobs will be created.

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NEWS

TV antiques expert to be group guest

Vaulations by Bargain Hunt's Charles Hanson

AUCTIONEER Charles Hanson will address members of Cheslyn Hay and District Local History Society later this year.

Well-known for appearances on BBC's Bargain Hunt and Flog It, Mr Hanson has been confirmed as one of the group's guest speakers in 2013.

He will give a 45-minute talk on Thursday, May 30, from 2pm, followed by a 45-minute valuation session.

Mr Hanson is a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Fine Art Surveyors and worked for Christies in London. He established Hansons Auctioneers in Derbyshire in 2005.

He is the youngest Bargain Hunt expert and has appeared on Antique Road Trip, having just filmed a celebrity version featuring Sir Terry Wogan.

He also recently filmed an American antiques show called "What the Sell!" in Chicago.

Tickets

Mr Hanson often conducts charity auctions and, on behalf of ex-England cricketer Darren Gough, sold his winning Strictly Come Dancing outfit for £3,000.

Tickets for his visit to the Salem, High Street, Cheslyn Hay are £2.50. Valuations £1 per item. Call Trevor McFarlane on (01922) 414772.

Photographer Ron Darby is the speaker at the group's meeting tonight (Thursday) with his slide show Scenes of the Chase from 7.30pm at the Salem, £1 including refreshments.

Battalion's soldiers are spared axe in Army cuts

TROOPS from the Black Country and Staffordshire's 'home' battalion have been spared from the latest round of Army cuts.

Up to 5,300 soldiers are to be made redundant in the summer as part of plans to reduce the strength of the regular Army to 82,000 by 2020.

by John Scott

Redundancy notices will be issued on June 18 but the Government said any personnel preparing for, serving on, or recovering from operations on that date will not lose their jobs unless they have applied for redundancy.

Withdrawn

The 3rd Battalion The Mercian Regiment (the Staffords) are currently training for deployment to the front line in Afghanistan before British troops are withdrawn from that conflict in 2014, so only those who volunteer for redundancy would be considered.

3Mercian is set to be lost during the reorganisation and its troops will be merged with the 1st and 2nd Battalions of The Mercian Regiment.

But Army chiefs have vowed that soldiers serving with units that will cease to exist as a result of the cuts will not be specifically targeted for redundancy.

This summer's redundancies are the third and largest wave to hit services. The first tranche in September 2011 saw 2,860 forces personnel made redundant, the second in June 2012 involved 3,760.

Defence Minister Mark Francois confirmed: "No-one who is serving on specified operations on the day the redundancy notices are issued on June 18 2013 will be made redundant unless they are applicants.

"Similarly, those preparing for, or recovering from such operations on the day the redundancy notices are issued will not be made redundant unless they have applied."

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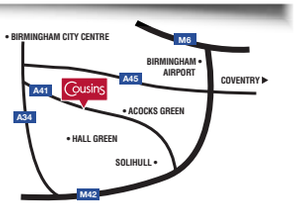

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CLUB NEWS

Speaker's sweet old memories

PELSALL 'E' TG

SNOW and blizzards reduced attendance at the January meeting by 50 per cent, but those who braved the elements were rewarded with a nostalgic talk by Margaret Smallman on 'Growing up in a Corner Shop'.

Ladies were able to reminisce about the sweet treats of their childhoods. Margaret also recalled the times when the corner shop was the hub of the community and the centre for gossip.

Matters discussed during the formal part of the meeting covered ideas for forthcoming trips, nominations for the committee election at the AGM on March 21, the Federation Dinner and a possible venue and entertainment for the Guild's 50th birthday dinner on the May 16.

The competition for the most popular decorative tin was won by Ann Sale and the monthly raffle was won by Val Walker.

On February 21, Jacqueline Smith of Nova Chocolates will demonstrate the art of the chocolatier and hopefully bringing along a few samples. The competition is for the most popular pair of earrings.

Pelsall Guild meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7.45pm. at Pelsall Community Centre, Station Road, Pelsall. For more details, call Val Walker on 01922 684724, or Margaret Worrall on 01922 682466.

'Birdman' ruffles feathers with talk

Guest speaker Colin McShane - Birdman Of Brewood

SHARESHILL WI

AT THE January meeting, Colin McShane talked to the group about our 'Feathered friends'.

Known as the Birdman of Brewood and a member of Brewood Ringers, he gave a really interesting and amusing talk about the lives and habits of those birds visiting our gardens.

Members learned how to recognise them, how they feed and how to help them through the winter.

Finally, Colin encouraged the ladies to join in with the RSPB's big bird watch and members armed with counting forms will be ready to check on bird life in their gardens.

Fashion night aids appeal

BROWNHILLS TWG

BROWNHILLS Townswomen are organising an evening filled with fashion to raise money for the group's chosen charity of the year, the new Cyberknife for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

Vice chairman Astrid van der Burgt said: "This Cyberknife will benefit people all across the Midlands."

The Cyberknife will be the first of its kind in the UK, providing precision radiotherapy treatment for cancer patients. "We wanted to organise a fun event to raise awareness of the machine and collect funds for it at the same time," added Astrid.

The guild chooses a charity to support each year.

The fashion show will be held at the Brownhills Memorial on Thursday, March 7 with doors opening at 7pm.

There will be plenty of bargains as well as a chance to win one a prize donated by local businesses. Tickets are £2.50 each. Contact Astrid on 07900 267366 or Mary on 01543-360890.

Further information about the Cyberknife can be found at: **www.qecancerappeal.org**

Brownhills Townswomen's Guild is a registered charity and the group meets every second Tuesday of the month, apart from August, in the Lichfield Suite of the Memorial Hall at 7.30pm.

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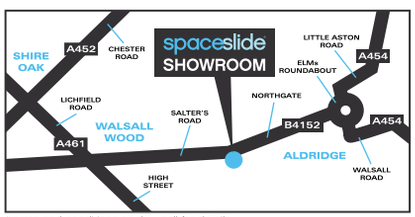

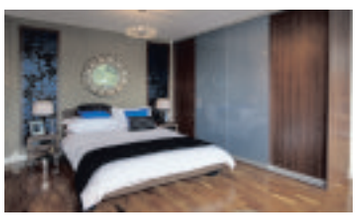

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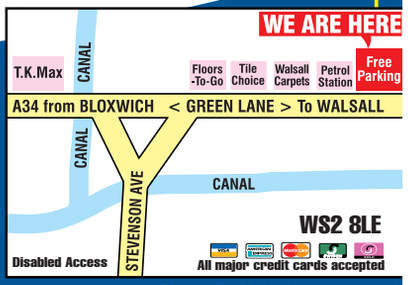

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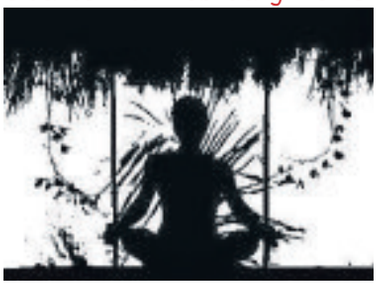

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LETTERS

Euthanasia – who's life is this anyway?

WHENEVER I get chance I try to read Peter Rhodes column in the Walsall Chronicle and whilst sometimes I agree with his view and at other times I disagree I felt I should comment on his perspective on euthanasia.

No one that I know who supports euthanasia talks 'blithely' about safeguards. They talk very seriously about how important it is to have appropriate safeguards in place.

The current situation in the UK does not allow people to have the freedom to choose how to end their own lives. Not only that, those who are opposed to euthanasia for themselves also insist on standing in the way of those who would choose this route. If you do not want euthanasia then do not choose that option. Who's life is this anyway?

Consequently, people are made to live indefinitely with their enormous suffering against their own wishes or take their own lives violently just to ease their own minds and somehow import meaning and some control to their demise.

For those who have the financial means, they can take a trip to Switzerland to have a dignified, but unnecessarily early, end to their lives. How cruel is this? How fair is this?

Why should you not be able to ask a doctor to end your suffering and to die at home with your family and friends around you. If that is what you want? If that is not what you want, then die "at the end of your natural life". But don't force others who think differently to do the same. Please!

BILL GREEN
Walsall Humanists
Bell Road
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LETTERS to the Editor

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walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Appalled by tactics of the Labour group

ON MONDAY, January 7, 2013 I attended the Council House of Walsall and was appalled by the behaviour of the Labour group in the debate on councillors' expenses.

Their tactics against the three independent councillors was shameful and they appear to use the same 'iron fist' of Gordon Brown with the vocabulary of John Prescott.

The conservatives all voted for the exorbitant rise, the three independent councillors and five Liberal Democrats against. The Lib Dem vote was quite a surprise as they normally vote with the Conservatives.

The Labour group unanimously sat on their hands, therefore allowing the rises to be passed. Like the proverbial Christmas turkeys who don't vote for Christmas hoping it will be their "Christmas" after the next election when they will inherit these increases (after Mike Bird has taken the voters' flak) hoping that the electorate will forget that by their abstentions the changes are now in place for the next four years.

All they had to do was vote against to maintain the status quo. The Labour mayor did nothing to call the meeting to order. I thought that was his role, to maintain respectful behaviour no matter which party was speaking.

I ask the electorate of Walsall to either stand as independent candidates or support other independents who vote with their principles to represent their constituents and do not act like a posse of nodding dogs who have to toe the party line.

The Pensioners Convention were protesting outside the Town Hall against the rise but did not attend the meeting (the same thing happened last year). It is a pity that they came out in the cold but did not go to see Councillor Richard Worrall – one of their leading members – abstain, thereby allowing the rises to go ahead.

So it's 'bread today, jam tomorrow' whether Labour or Conservative!

CHRISTINE STATHAM
Millfield Avenue
Bloxwich

An army on the cheap

IN JUNE this year circa 5,300 soldiers will be made redundant, in this third of five waves of cuts to the service. Not only cuts in military forces but for the supporting jobs in companies engaged with our defence.

The Government wants an army on the cheap, they want to replace the majority of our full time paid soldiers with reservists, whom they do not have to pay but can call up at a moment's notice to defend us.

Why? Firstly to save money, secondly because the role of the soldier is diminishing with the advent of more sophisticated weaponry, which costs vast amounts of money.

We have just seen the pay of new police officers cut by £4,000 per year for new recruits, after making thousands of officers redundant to save money.

My worry is that we will see reservists introduced into our emergency services, especially in our fire brigades. They too are highly trained and paid to stand by until required.

MR A PARKER
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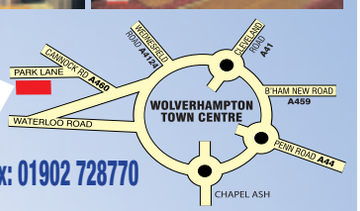

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NEWS

Lecturer scoops a top award for photograph

Photography lecturer Bryn Griffiths, right, from Walsall College who has won an award for his photograph, above, entitled Tempestuous Saviour, taken for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution

A LECTURER from Walsall College has scooped a prestigious international awards for one of his photographs.

Photography lecturer Bryn Griffiths won the International Loupe Award. He was awarded first place in the Advertising and Fashion category for his photograph entitled Tempestuous Saviour.

It is a striking photograph of a sculpture produced for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) to represent the essential work of the organisation saving lives at sea. It was taken in a studio at the charity's headquarters in Poole, Dorset.

Mr Griffiths has also been shortlisted in the final of the Federation of European Professional (FEP) Photographer of the Year Awards. He said: "I am thrilled to receive recognition for my work."

Mr Griffiths has more than 25 years experience in commercial photography and has been a lecturer at the college since November.

He is one of 10 finalists to have been shortlisted in the commercial category of theprestigious FEP Awards.

The FEP winners will be announced on April 15.

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NEWS

Great War training camps are unearthed

TRAINING camps for more than 500,000 soldiers in the First World War on Cannock Chase are to be unveiled this summer.

The scale model of Belgian battlefield the Messines Ridge was used by the British Army to train soldiers for fighting on the Western Front.

The model, based on aerial photography, covered the size of a tennis court.

The camps on the Chase were dismantled when the guns fell silent, but the remains are some of the most complete Great War archaeological sites in this country.

Survival

The project, to start in August, aims to reveal more about Staffordshire's involvement in the First World War, and act as a reminder of the sacrifice made by thousands of troops in Flanders and northern France.

Scrub and bramble will be removed from a surviving area of barrack blocks close to the White House car park. The site could become part of the Great War centenary commemorations in 2014.

The major part of the project involves the careful excavation, recording and reburial of the Messines mode, which was designed by Commonwealth engineers but probably built by German prisoners of war in late 1917.

Staffordshire County Councillor Pat Corfield, Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities, said: "It is essential we continue to teach future generations about the legacy of the conflict. We must never forget the great sacrifices made and this exciting excavation project will help achieve that and showcase Staffordshire's role in the Great War."

The interpretation of the Messines model and training camps will be based at the Marquis Drive Visitor Centre. It is hoped visitors will be able to experience an actual or digital model of the Messines trench system to understand how they were used to prepare troops for battle.

The Great War training camps under construction on The Chase

Trenches dug on Cannock Chase to mimic the Belgian battlefield

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NEWS

Men are sought after night clubs violence

CCTV images have been released after two men were badly injured in in separate attacks in Walsall night clubs. The victims suffered a fractured jaw and broken nose.

Police are investigating the two unprovoked and unconnected assaults which happened in the town centre on the same night.

A 45-year-old suffered a fractured jaw and several teeth were dislodged after being punched in Fever Nightclub in Lichfield Street. It happened around 2am on December 8. Two CCTV images of men police want to speak to in connection with the incident have been released.

Image from the police

One of the images

This man is sought

Punched

The second attack happened at around 11.50pm at Revolution bar on Bridge Street where an 18-year-old man was drinking with friends. A man walked up to him and punched him in the face.

The student's nose was broken in the assault and detectives have released a picture of a suspect. He was described by the victim as white, stocky and with a large tattoo on his left arm.

Detective Constable Matthew Tromans, said: "We want people to be able to come to the town to enjoy a safe night out."

Anyone who can name the men should call DC Tromans on 101 or Crimestoppers.

Thief went on a spree with stolen credit cards

A THIEF took the handbag of a 79-year-old woman while she was shopping before going on a two-hour spending spree using stolen credit cards, a court heard.

Amy Mall, of Willenhall, engaged the elderly woman in conversation about items on sale at Wolverhampton's Waitrose store, Marston Road, last September. When the victim was alone again she realised her handbag had gone.

Mall was captured on CCTV leaving the store with a handbag she did not have when she entered, Wolverhampton Magistrates Court heard last week.

Mr Mark Cooper, prosecuting, said within around two hours of the theft, Mall visited four stores with her husband Raj.

Using stolen credit cards, the pair bought spent £57.89 at Co-op in Wednesfield at 1.10pm, then shopped in nearby Sainsbury's twice, buying goods worth £110.98.

Thief – Amy Mall

Heroin

They were eventually caught at JD Sports, Bentley Bridge, at 1.50pm that day, when the card was rejected.

Amy Mall, 29, of Somerford Place, admitted theft and four counts of fraud by false representation, while Raj Mall, 43, admitted four frauds by false representation.

Mr Mohammed Kasujee, defending, said his clients were heroin addicts but had tried to change their ways since Raj's father suffered a stroke.

Magistrates sentenced Raj Mall, who had appeared in custody as a prisoner already serving 24 weeks for taking a vehicle without consent, to 12 weeks custody to run concurrent to his existing jail term.

Amy Mall, the subject of a community order, was made subject to a new 18-month community order including 12 months' supervision and a six-month drink and drug programme requirement.

She was also ordered to pay £200 compensation and £85 court costs.

Beer festival in April

WALSALL'S 32nd annual beer festival will be held at the beginning of April, the organisers have announced.

The popular event, which attracts thousands of people each year, will take place at Walsall Town Hall on April 4, 5 and 6.

It regularly features more than 100 different real ales, ciders, perrys, and continental beers.

The beer festival returned to the town hall, in Leicester Street, last year after being held at Walsall College for one occasion.

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Also included is entrance to the Tower of London, one of the most famous prisons in British history, which has also served as a fortress and a palace. Here you will see a variety of attractions including the Crown Jewels, a collection of over 20,000 pieces with one of the world's most famous diamonds.

At Royal Greenwich you can see The Cutty Sark which was the world's fastest sailing ship of her day and the world's last surviving tea clipper. It was re-opened by the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh in April 2012 following an extensive conservation project costing £25 million.

Other attractions at Royal Greenwich, are the Old Royal Naval College, a baroque masterpiece of English Architecture and you may like to stand on the world famous Greenwich Meridian Line which represents the Prime Meridian of the World - Longitude 0°.

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NEWS

Police promise leaner and quicker service

BOSSES at Walsall Police are responding to the latest round of cuts by making changes in a bid to improve services for residents.

The latest moves aim to cut down on waste, inefficiency and duplication – as well as making emergency response times faster, despite a reduction in the size of neighbourhood teams.

Appointment

In future, members of the public making non-emergency calls will be offered two options.

These include 'policing by appointment', giving residents the option to meet with officers at a time and location to suit them; or they can take advice over the phone.

Chief Superintendent Dave Sturman described the new approach as "continuous improvement".

He explained: "Continuous improvement is leaner and is a more efficient way of doing business, and has already proven to be successful across other local policing units.

"The public want to know we are there when they need us, whether that's as a rapid response to a 999 call or as a scheduled appointment to investigate a crime."

He added: "They want us to focus on solving crime and being a part of their community. The new structure will allow us to do just that."

Other changes include a revised help desk, an incident resolution team to handle all calls, a response team focused on rapid incident response, a larger investigation team and community priority teams to resolve issues within the community.

Man, 62, is arrested in 'flasher' inquiries

A 62-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of 'flashing' at schoolchildren.

West Walsall Academy pupils reported a man in bushes on wasteland near the school in Primley Avenue, Alumwell, exposing himself as they passed.

Public protection officers are investigating two incidents on January 11 and 24. On Thursday the man is said to have approached a group of Year 9 boys.

Police seized clothing and computer equipment from the man's home. He is being questioned on suspicion of indecent exposure.

More jobs down the line for IT apprentices

MORE opportunities for apprentices are coming to Walsall this year thanks to a successful scheme run in partnership with telecommunications giant BT.

A new scheme is being launched by BT working with the National Skills Academy for IT (information technology) to create 25 jobs for youngsters with some of the area's small to medium sized employers.

This follows on from similar successful projects in other UK towns and cities.

NiTP offer IT Apprenticeships in Walsall at a purpose-built IT Training Academy in Longacre Street.

Recruits will undergo the IT Gold Standard Apprenticeship, a programme designed to help apprentices integrate into the workplace and gain technical and professional skills more quickly.

Karen Price, e-skills boss, said: "Making the recruitment of apprentices by smaller organisations an easier and more attractive option is helping them develop the skilled workforce needed to drive their businesses forward."

If employers or apprentices in the area are interested, they can visit www.nitp.co.uk/nitp-walsall.html for details.

The partnership received co-investment from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills via the Growth and Innovation Fund.

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NEWS

TV shows help to deliver midwife course interest

SOARING numbers of young people are signing up to be midwives – thanks to the popularity of television shows featuring the profession.

Call The Midwife and One Born Every Minute are being credited with the rise. Demand for courses is now so popular that in many cases, the amount of applications far outweighs the number of places available.

The University of Wolverhampton received nearly 1,000 applications for just 63 midwife places in 2011 while at Staffordshire University, the number of applications increased by more than 13 per cent on the previous year. Midwifery courses at the University of Worcester are also oversubscribed.

Tutors have credited the popularity of the two television shows, which give different insights into the lives of midwifes, as one of the factors contributing to the surge in interest.

Call the Midwife, which has started its second series on BBC1, is based on the real life experiences of nurse Jennifer Worth.

Covers

It stars Miranda Hart and has been a runaway success with almost nine million viewers tuning in to follow the lives of midwives in the 1950s.

The popular One Born Every Minute, which airs on Channel 4, is also a ratings hit. The show covers the day-to-day life on a maternity ward following both mothers and staff.

Education chiefs at the University of Wolverhampton say there has always been a lot of interest in the profession but there is now a growing number of people who are seeking a career in midwifery.

Marcia Edwards, head of midwifery, maternity and the newborn said: "Midwifery has always been a popular course here at Wolverhampton and we have never experienced any difficulty in filling places. However, since Call the Midwife and One Born Every Minute there has been a positive knock-on effect for midwifery.

"Some days may be sad or extremely difficult but more often than not midwives are part of one of the most special moments of people's lives.

"Television programmes such as these bring the ups and downs of life as a midwife into viewers' minds."

Charlotte Milligan is currently studying to be a midwife at the University of Wolverhamptom.

The 18-year-old, from Featherstone said shows such as Call the Midwife, can be valuable in her studies by providing alternative insights into the profession.

"I think programmes do trigger an interest," she said.

"It's encourages people to find out about the industry. I watch them because I'm happy watching anything to do with midwifery."

Student Charlotte Milligan finds Call the Midwife provides valuable insights

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Joining the stars for Grand performances

In The Ladykillers at The Grand are, from left, Angela Watson and Christine Adams, both 70, Marlene Manley and Lynne Eagle, both 65

FOUR local women will rub shoulders with top actress Michele Dotrice when they take to the Grand Theatre stage in Wolverhampton for a West End play that's arrived on tour.

Lynne Eagle, Christine Adams, Angela Watson and Marlene Manley have won a role in The Ladykillers alongside Michele, who played Frank Spencer's wife Betty in 1970s sitcom Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em.

They will appear as four little old ladies in two scenes in the production. Lynne and Christine have previous acting experience with Secga Theatre Company while Marlene has been a member of Goldthorn Theatre Company since 1997.

Angela, from Codsall, said: "I'm really looking forward to it."

Lynne, from Wightwick, Christine, from Tettenhall, and Marlene, from Goldthorn Park, applied for the role after seeing an ad in the paper. Michele plays the role of Louisa Wilberforce in Graham Linehan's stage adaptation of the 1955 Ealing comedy film, appearing alongside EastEnders star Cliff Parisi and Casualty actor Clive Mantle.

The show runs until Saturday).

It's a killer comedy

The Ladykillers, Wolverhampton Grand

FORMER Father Ted co-writer Graham Linehan has given a classic vintage British movie a witty revamp with lots of added slapstick in this enjoyable 1950s-set romp.

Screenwriter William Rose's original black comedy, about a criminal gang posing as a string ensemble to fool their elderly landlady, is given a broad farce treatment aiming for big laughs, which it achieves. An excellent cast and an ingenious set ensure a satisfying production.

Paul Bown is a treat as the slightly deranged would-be criminal mastermind whilst Michelle Dotrice is his delightful nemesis as the semi-senile senior with a stubborn streak. The rest of the gang are colourful characters too, William Troughton as a pill-popping young villain, Cliff Parisi as a word-mangling Romanian cut-throat, Clive Mantle as a nervous conman with transvestite tendencies and Chris McCalphy as a punch-drunk former boxer with a soft streak.

The other star is Michael Taylor's award-nominated set, a lopsided and subsided skewiff Victorian house where chairs go skittering across floors because of the earthquake-like vibrations of passing trains. At one point the outer walls become like a Scalextric set as model cars represent a cash van robbery and police chase.

This is an exuberant, audience-pleasing play and it continues its run at the Grand until Saturday.

Leon Burakowski

Rocky rolls on

The Rocky Horror Show, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

AS IT celebrates its 40th year of cult status, Richard O'Brien's The Rocky Horror Show remains the sexiest stage musical on the planet. For the uninitiated, it is a hilarious celebration of the B-movie, following engaged couple Brad and Janet as they take shelter at the home of mad transvestite scientist Frank-N-Furter, who has been building the perfect muscle man.

The latest production will not have disappointed die-hard fans who, as always came dressed, in their wigs and suspenders and rocked along to the Time Warp.

Of particular note were Roxanne Pallet (Emmerdale), playing Janet, Ben Forster (Jesus Christ Superstar), as Brad, and Philip Franks narrating. Rhydian (X Factor / We Will Rock You) earned big laughs.

Fans of the film, the Rocky Horror Picture Show, may have found Oliver Thornton's Frank-N-Furter accent to be a little off but all was forgiven the moment he unveiled his hallmark corset-suspender combo.

As is traditional, the audience interjected with regular vulgar outbursts (leave the kids at home for this one). At times it left me, as a first-timer, feeling on the outside of an in-joke but for the most part these interruptions only added to the show's charm.

Rocky Horror continues at the Alex until Saturday.

Will Ackermann

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BOOK REVIEWS

Tube celebrates 150 years of keeping London on the move

THE LONDON Underground, the world's first underground railway, celebrated 150 years of keeping the capital on the move in January.

The city at the heart of the world's greatest empire was grinding to a halt in the 1850s. London had seen its population more than double in half a century to two-and-half-million. The streets were choked by horse-drawn traffic and pedestrians.

Fanciful projects were suggested to solve this problem, some now sounding like they've come straight out of a steampunk fantasy – such as great elevated glass corridors for overhead trains.

Engineering

It was decided to burrow under the streets, taking the new-fangled steam locomotive into the bowels of the earth with navvies using the 'cut and cover' method to create railway tunnels.

The three-and-half-mile Metropolitan Railway, linking Paddington, Euston and King's Cross stations with the city's financial and business heart, opened on January 9, 1863. A grand celebration dinner was held underground but notable by his absence was Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, who replied that at the age of 79 he would prefer to stay above ground for a few more years.

This set in motion one of the great transport endeavours of the Victorian and Edwardian ages, eras resplendent with awe-inspiring engineering projects.

Written by three experts from the London Transport Museum, located in Covent Garden, **Underground: How the Tube Shaped London (Allen Lane, hardback, £25)** is a large handsome book. It is very informative and beautifully illustrated with diagrams, photographs and the distinctive style of Underground art. It tells the story of the network as it grew, with steam locos giving way to electric tube trains, boring ever deeper under the city.

Writers David Bownes, Oliver Green and Sam Mullins share chapters. Topics range from the Victorian entrepreneurs to the war years, when the deep lines became unofficial air raid shelters, to the political wrangles of the post-war period, finishing with the 21st century modern system that provides four million passenger journeys a day.

For a more poetic exploration of the world beneath the streets of the capital, Peter Ackroyd's **London Under (Vintage, paperback, £7.99)** descends into the tube and the catacombs, bunkers, vaults, pipes and sewers carved out of the clay.

It's a slim volume but packed with anecdotes and fascinating trivia, such as forgotten Westbourne river still flowing through an iron pipe at Sloane Street tube station.

Ackroyd never misses an opportunity to link this hidden realm with the underworlds of mythology. He also includes an excellent bibliography for further reading.

Leon Burakowski

The famous Underground roundel

Written by experts on the system

Underground art © TfL from the London Transport Museum collection

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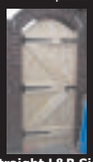

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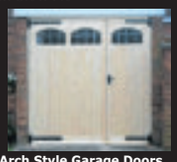

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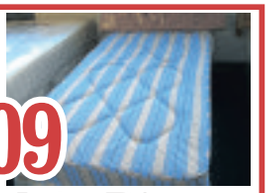

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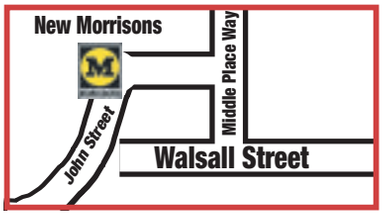

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MEMORY LANE

Standing proud – Beaudesert Hall, for many years the seat of the Marquis of Anglesey, before its demolition

This picture shows the stunning long gallery, complete with fabulous fittings, at the historic Beaudesert Hall

A rear view of Beaudesert Hall, home to the Pagets

Historic hall's staircase built to accommodate wooden leg

by Ron Bradbury

BETWEEN the Wars, Beaudesert Hall, the seat of the Marquis of Anglesey and home to the Pagets since Henry VIII, hit hard times.

A spendrift Marquis, death duties and diminishing income from estates had caused the Pagets to retreat to their Anglesey home, Plas Newydd.

The once proud hall started to decay. No buyer came forward and the interior fittings were put under auction. The hall stood empty until a fire made it unsafe and it was mainly demolished leaving just a few walls standing.

An Australian couple on honeymoon were having a mansion built on ground given as a wedding present and they bought a large proportion of the fittings and windows from the hall and had them shipped back to their home town of Adelaide.

The fittings included the famous Waterloo Staircase, which had been specially designed so the newly created Marquis of Anglesey could negotiate the stairs with his wooden leg.

Paget, then Earl of Uxbridge, was second in command at Waterloo, and had his leg sawn off after being wounded. He his reputed to be the first person to have a wooden leg with a knee joint and was able to dance as well as he had before he lost his limb.

The aerial photo shows the Adelaide mansion, known as Carrick Hill, one of the few period homes in Australia to survive with its original contents almost completely intact. It is one of only a handful of such places open to the public in the country.

The others show Beaudesert Hall before demolition. My local photo book, now out of print, showing some photos of Beaudesert Hall was presented to the Carrick Hill House Trust by my friend John Ashley on a visit.

Atmospheric

The Burntwood Chase Heritage Group Nostalgia Night is on Tuesday, February 5, when the atmospheric film 'Turn of the Tide' will be screened. The venue is St Johns Church, High Street, Chase Terrace at 7.30pm. This film is being shown by request and has not been seen for several years.

Aerial shot of Carrick Hill period home in Australia

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NEWS

Thousands of parking ticket fines are reversed

THOUSANDS of parking fines are wrongly being handed out in the Black Country and Staffordshire with hundreds of thousands of pounds in fines being reversed as a result.

Councils cancelled more than 17,800 tickets last year for machine problems, attendant errors and the driver holding a disabled badge.

Wolverhampton Council cancelled 5,573 tickets, which would have brought in an extra £262,715.

Sandwell Council overturned 5,350 tickets in the year 2011 to 2012, Walsall Council cancelled 3,588 tickets and Stafford Borough Council cancelled 1,938 tickets.

Disabled

Dudley Council overturned 1,434 tickets, which equates to £79,541 in lost fines.

In Sandwell, there were 544 "attendant errors" while, in 1,297 cases, the fine was scrapped after it was revealed the driver was a disabled badge holder.

A duplicated car registration number was blamed on 41 occasions.

Councillor Ian Jones, cabinet member for neighbourhood services, said: "We have always said that if people get a ticket and feel that it has been issued unjustly, they should appeal where it will be reviewed."

In Dudley, tickets were cancelled for reasons including faulty machines and inadequate signs.

Councillor Judy Foster said all appeals are investigated thoroughly to ensure motorists get a fair deal.

Ambulance complaints on the rise

THE number of complaints made against West Midlands Ambulance Service has risen by more than 50 per cent.

There have been 279 formal complaints made so far this financial year, according to its Patient Safety and Quality Report. Top reasons include response times.

The attitude and conduct of ambulance service employees also feature in the list of public complaints. A total of 22 serious incidents were also reported at the service since last April.

West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman Claire Thomas said: "Whilst we acknowledge a rise in the number of complaints, this is largely down to people expecting an ambulance to be dispatched to every 999 call, however minor it might be.

"Only around 10 per cent of calls are genuinely life threatening. Each call we receive is triaged with the most serious receiving the most immediate response. "

Stylish finale for week

Models, back left, Megan Timmins, and front, Mille Morgan and Sophie Morris, with Big Brother's Lauren Carre

A CATWALK show featuring a TV celebrity brought Walsall's first ever fashion week to a close.

Special guest Lauren Carre, who appeared in Big Brother 2012, compered the show held in the Saddlers Shopping Centre in Walsall. Department store Debenhams showed off some of its clothes, while models also sported garments by some of the West Midlands' up-and-coming designers, such as Jade Hope and Emma Finlay.

Throughout the week, fashion-related fun was on offer at the Create 48 shop in the shopping centre. Walsall Fashion Week was organised by Walsall College students Dermot McNamara and Chloe Adcock.

Money was raised for charities such as Acorns Children's Hospice and Arthritis Research.

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What's On! Walsall

Swing along with the crooners' songs

BROWNHILLS Musical Theatre Company will stage concerts at Walsall's Forest Arts Centre this weekend featuring classic easy listening songs.

Rhythm & Romance is a celebration of the 'Great American Songbook', including songs made famous by Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra, among others.

The concerts are tomorrow night (Friday) and Saturday at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £10 and are available from the www.positickets.co.uk website.

Help for Beatles fans from a tribute

A BEATLES tribute act will be performing in Burntwood next month.

The show will be held on Friday, February 15, at the Grangemoor Working Men's Club on Cannock Road.

Tickets cost £6 per person and are available from Affinity Homecare on High Street, Chasetown, or by calling 01543 677277.

All profits go towards the Royal British Legion Burntwood and District Women's Branch.

Senior orchestra perform at centre

WALSALL'S Senior Citizens Orchestra will perform at the town's Forest Arts Centre next week.

They will perform concerts at the Leamore venue on February 7 from 2pm and admission is £1.

Classic Christie whodunnits bring mystery and murder

MYSTERY grips two theatres in the region with the arrival on tour of a pair of Agatha Christie plays, one of them the most famous whodunnit in British stage history.

The Mousetrap, the longest running show in the West End with more than 25,000 performances during 60 years, is coming to Birmingham New Alexandra Theatre as part of its first UK tour, to mark its diamond anniversary.

It's at the Alex from Monday to Saturday with a cast including Karl Howman (from TV's Brushstrokes), Bruno Langley (Coronation Street), Graham Seed (from radio's The Archers) and former EastEnders Elizabeth Power, Steven France, Jemma Walker and Clare Wilkie. Bob Saul reprises his West End role as Sgt Trotter.

Daughter

The Mousetrap is also going to be staged at Wolverhampton Grand in late May.

Meanwhile, The Official Agatha Christie Theatre Company bring Go Back To Murder, in which a daughter seeks to clear her mother's name, to the Grand from Monday to Saturday.

The star-studded cast includes film and TV actors Sophie Ward (Land Girls), Lysette Anthony (Three Up Three Down), Robert Duncan (Drop The Dead Donkey), Ben Nealon (Soldier Soldier), Gary Mavers (Peak Practice) and Smethwick-born Liza Goddard.

Rock and soul gigs to relish

AN EXCELLENT late winter and spring for gigs is in prospect in the Black Country and Birmingham.

Highlights include a visit by legendary Stax and Blues Brothers guitarist Steve Cropper, teaming up with members of The Animals at The Robin 2 in Bilston tonight (Thursday).

Chart-topping teenaged singer-songwriter Jake Bugg is at Birmingham HMV Institute on February 19.

BBC DJ and former Fun Lovin' Criminal Huey Morgan brings his New Yorkers to the Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, on March 9.

Welsh rockers The Stereophonics road test new album Graffiti On The Train at Wolverhampton Civic on March 16.

Opera and family combine in a poignant theme for comedian Mark Thomas

Bravo idea for comic's latest tour

COMEDIAN and activist Mark Thomas has exposed arms dealers and abuses of civil liberties and is as handy with a megaphone as a microphone – holding the world record for the most individual protests held in a day.

In recent years he has been rambling along the Israeli border and travelled around Britain collecting clauses for his Manifesto, on BBC Radio 4.

Opera

But the theme of his latest tour is a more personal affair, the story of Mark's father, a builder with a love of opera. It tells of the comedian's attempt to put an opera on at the Bournemouth bungalow home of his father, who has a degenerative disease.

It is about love, death, fathers and sons, and the search for peace... with quite a few gags thrown in.

The Bravo Figaro tour brings him to Stourbridge Town Hall on Friday, February 15. Meanwhile, he will be back to his Manifesto at the Glee Club in Birmingham on Thursday, March 7.

Reviews

The Soldiers, Wolverhampton Grand

FROM the dangers of Iraq and Afghanistan to performing on stage at the Grand Theatre, The Soldiers delivered a knockout performance.

Their excellent vocals with clear diction in their singing was superb in every song.

Whilst Healing Hands, Home, Mother's Pride and Tears In Heaven brought a lump to the throat, a medley of Neil Diamond songs saw the soldiers amongst the audience who were clapping and singing along with them.

The standing ovation was well deserved.

Les Jowett

Real Diamond, Wolverhampton Grand

NEIL Diamond fans braving the snow and ice were rewarded to a real gem of a show, celebrating the singer's 73rd birthday.

John Hylton's vocal tribute to his hero was as near as one can get to the legend himself.

Cheers and applause from the audience acknowledged their appreciation as fans sang along to Sweet Caroline, Love On The Rocks and Beautiful Noise, to name a few.

Performing a selection of Barbra Streisand songs local girl Tina Law captured the unique sound of the diva herself with Second Hand Rose and Memories. The two duetted for You Don't Bring Me Flowers and a standing ovation was given for his final song Coming To America.

Les Jowett

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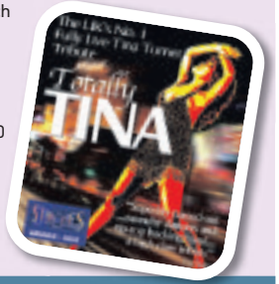
7.30pm • £17.50

Justine Riddoch presents
TOTALLY TINA
Saturday 30th
7.30pm • £16.00



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SATURDAY'S TV 2.02.13

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Clare Balding

Britain's Brightest BBC1, 7pm

Given his offbeat turns on Mock the Week, it's little wonder Milton Jones' star has been on the rise for some years now. This week he'll be helping to raise a few laughs on Clare Balding's puzzle-themed show, and with next week's final being the main focus for the final six contestants, it'll be intriguing to see who has the right stuff to make it through to the series end. Aside from Mr Jones, other challenges involve those nutty boys/men Madness, and a German bottle band. As ever the self-confessed brainboxes aim to get that one step closer to claiming the prize of £50,000.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Good Cook. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **12.15** Football Focus. **1.00** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. **3.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. **5.55** BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

6.15 Pointless Celebrities. With brother and sister Colin Jackson and Suzanne Packer. (R)

7.00 Britain's Brightest. The last six contestants compete for the remaining place in next week's final, taking on challenges involving pop group Madness, comedian Milton Jones and a German bottle band.

8.00 The National Lottery: In It to Win It. Dale Winton presents the quiz in which five contestants pit their wits to scoop a big cash prize. Includes the National Lottery draws, presented by Myleene Klass.

8.50 Casualty. Jordan's return to Holby reaches a dramatic climax when he is called upon to save the life of the person who killed his girlfriend. Michael French stars.

9.40 Mrs Brown's Boys. Rory and Dino have a bust-up, Mark and Betty announce their imminent departure to Australia and a strange phone call causes the Brown children to suspect one of them may be adopted. (R)

10.10 BBC News; Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day. Including action from Fulham v Manchester United; National Lottery Update.

12.00 The Football League Show. **1.15** Weatherview. **1.20** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Film: Devil's Canyon. (1953) **7.30** Great British Menu. (R) **8.00** Great British Menu. (R) **8.30** Great British Menu. (R) **9.00** Great British Menu. (R) **9.30** Great British Menu. (R) **10.00** A History of Britain by Simon Schama. (R) **11.00** Meet the Ancestors. (R) **11.30** Map Man. (R) **12.00** Indian Food Made Easy. (R) **12.30** Mastermind. (R) **1.00** University Challenge. (R) **1.30** Talking Pictures. **2.10 Film:** Anchors Aweigh. (1945) **4.25** Final Score. **5.30** The Great Comic Relief Bake Off. (R)

6.30 Flog It! James Lewis and Kate Bliss value items in Stroud. (R)

7.00 Top Gear. The motoring magazine returns. Jeremy Clarkson builds a small car and pitches the concept in the Dragons' Den, and Damian Lewis is the Star in a Reasonably Priced Car. (R)

8.00 Dad's Army. Sergeant Wilson joins the aristocracy. (R)

8.30 Natural World: Kangaroo Dundee. Part two of two. Brolga continues to raise the three joeys he rescued in his one-room tin shack in the Outback, but one of them is seriously ill.

9.30 Howard Goodall's Story of Music. The composer examines the extraordinarily fertile musical period between 1650 and 1750, which saw innovations including the orchestra, the overture, modern tuning and the piano. Also on BBC HD at 11pm.

10.30 QI XL. With Nina Conti, Sean Lock and Bill Bailey. (R)

11.15 Film: The Good Shepherd. (2006) Fact-based spy drama, starring Matt Damon and Robert De Niro.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Handy Manny. **6.10** Handy Manny. **6.25** The Hive. (R) **6.35** The Hive. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.55** Dino Dan. (R) **7.05** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.15** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.30** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.40** Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) **8.05** Ultimate Spider-Man. **8.30** Victorious. (R) **9.00** Jessie. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **11.20** Saturday Cookbook. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **1.25** Countrywise. (R) **1.40** My Tasty Travels with Lynda Bellingham. (R) **2.40** Dinner Date. (R) **3.45 Film:** The Flintstones. (1994) **5.30** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.45** ITV News; Weather.

6.00 New You've Been Framed! Top 100 Talent.

7.00 Splash! The final, which sees the four remaining celebrity divers attempting to somersault, twist and pike their way to victory. Last in the series.

8.30 Take Me Out. A guitar teacher, a 999 call operator, a choir leader and a butcher enter the love lift in the hope of impressing 30 single women. Paddy McGuinness presents the dating show.

9.45 The Jonathan Ross Show. The host chats to comedian Eddie Izzard, broadcaster and naturalist David Attenborough, stand-up-turned-actor Russell Brand and action-film star Dolph Lundgren. With music by Pulp.

10.50 ITV News; Weather.

11.05 Film: Pride and Prejudice. (2005) Period drama, starring Keira Knightley.

1.25 Jackpot247. **2.55** In Plain Sight. (R) **3.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Sali Mali. (R) **6.10** The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.05** Beach Volleyball. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** Undercover Boss Australia. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. **4.00** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. **4.30** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. **5.05** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. **5.35** Come Dine with Me: Ireland.

6.05 Come Dine with Me: Ireland. Former lawyer Fiona Buckley, now a nut trader, hopes her belly of pork main will be enough to win her the 1,000 euro prize as she hosts the final dinner party in Cork.

6.35 Channel 4 News.

7.05 4thought.tv. People of different faiths talk about how their religion views the consumption of alcohol.

7.10 Film: Crocodile Dundee. (1986) An Australian hunter with a larger-than-life reputation accompanies a reporter from the Outback to the urban jungle of Manhattan. Comedy, starring Paul Hogan and Linda Kozlowski.

9.00 World Without End. Mother Cecilia sends Caris to France to petition the king, who is desperate to find a way for his army to cross the River Somme, otherwise they will be trapped and under siege.

10.00 Film: Along Came a Spider. (2001) Detective thriller, starring Morgan Freeman.

12.05 Film: Chatroom. (2010)

1.50 Film: Birthday Girl. (2001) Comedy, with Nicole Kidman. **3.20** Hollyoaks. **5.25** Countdown. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Power Rangers Samurai. (R) **10.35** Batman: The Brave and the Bold. **11.10** Inside Hollywood 2013. **11.20** The Gadget Show. (R) **12.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.20 Film:** Mrs Caldicot's Cabbage War. (2000) **3.30 Film:** Desperate Escape. (2009) **5.15 Film:** By Appointment Only. (2007)

6.50 5 News Weekend.

6.55 NCIS. (R)

7.45 NCIS. Gibbs sends DiNozzo and Ziva on a decoy mission to retrieve top-secret information from a secure military base, in a bid to expose a spy in NCIS. (R)

8.40 Law & Order. A cop is murdered during a botched robbery, triggering an investigation that leads Green and Cassady to a paparazzo who may have compromising photos of a celebrity. (R)

9.40 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. New series. The detectives are forced to rely on an officer from another district when a rape victim refuses to talk to anyone but him, while introductions to the new ADA go badly.

10.40 Law & Order: Criminal Intent. New series. Part one of two. Goren and Eames investigate an illegal arms deal.

11.35 True Crimes: The First 72 Hours. A sexual predator is caught by behavioural and geographical profiling.

12.05 SuperCasino. **4.00** Michaela's Wild Challenge. (R) **4.25** Divine Designs. (R) **4.50** County Secrets. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.15** The Milkshake! Show. (R) **5.40** Thomas & Friends. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Merlin **7.45** Doctor Who **8.35 Film:** Cool Runnings (1993). Fact-based sporting comedy, starring John Candy. **10.10** Russell Howard's Good News Extra **10.55** Family Guy **11.40** American Dad!

BBC Four

7.00 Lost Land of the Volcano **8.00** The Treasures of Ancient Rome **9.00** Borgen **11.00** Queens of British Pop

ITV2

5.50 Film: Toy Story (1995) **7.35 Film:** Back to the Future Part II (1989). Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Michael J Fox. **9.45** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.30** Fake Reaction **11.15 Film:** Wanted (2008). Action adventure, starring James McAvoy and Angelina Jolie.

ITV3

2.50 A Touch of Frost **5.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00 Film:** The Graduate (1967)

ITV4

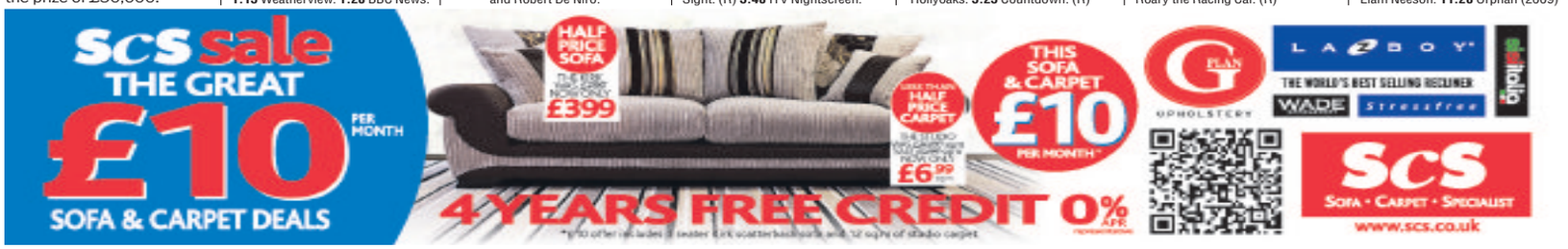
2.30 Live Africa Cup of Nations. The opening quarter-final (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.15** Cheers **5.45** World of Sport: Footballing Upsets **6.00** Live Africa Cup of Nations. The second quarter-final (Kick-off 6.30pm). **9.00** Champions League Heroes **10.00 Film:** Nighthawks (1981)

E4

3.35 Rules of Engagement **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** Happy Endings **8.00** How I Met Your Mother **8.30** 2 Broke Girls **9.00 Film:** Top Gun (1986) **11.10** The Big Bang Theory

Film4

3.05 Murder Ahoy (1964) **4.55** Little Manhattan (2005) **6.40** Mona Lisa Smile (2003) **9.00** The A-Team (2010) Action adventure, starring Liam Neeson. **11.20** Orphan (2009)



What's On!

SUNDAY'S TV 3.02.13

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Brian Cox

Wonders of Life
BBC2, 9pm
Professor Brian Cox is everywhere at the minute. University lecturer by day, stargazer and the Beeb's most intriguing presenter by night, it's little wonder he finds the time to fit it all in. But that he does, and he stretches himself even further as his new series Wonders of Life continues. The physicist is making his way around the globe, on a mission to investigate whether the emergence of life was an inevitable consequence of the physical laws that rule the universe. This week, Brian finds himself doing what most of us often dream of; tripping across America.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.25** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Sunday Politics; Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.25** Countryfile. (R) **1.25** Call the Midwife. (R) **2.25** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. **5.00** Africa. (R)

6.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

6.30 Blandings. David Walliams returns as no-nonsense secretary Baxter.

7.00 Countryfile. Items from the snowy Yorkshire Dales, including cheese-making at Jervaulx Abbey in the style of the Cistercian monks and following a veterinary couple on their farm rounds. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

8.00 Call the Midwife. Jenny is seconded to a short-staffed hospital in London, but intimidating surgeon Mr Tracey leaves her reluctant to carry out her duties.

9.00 Ripper Street. Reid senses something amiss when a Jewish anarchist is found dead, leading the team into the murky world of the British government's fight against international terrorism.

10.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

10.25 Match of the Day 2. Including highlights of Manchester City v Liverpool.

11.15 Room 101 – Extra Storage. With Cilla Black, Hugh Dennis and Mel Giedroyc.

11.55 The Sky at Night. From the Royal Observatory, Greenwich.

12.15 The Celebrity Apprentice USA. **1.40** Six Nations Rugby Union. **2.25** Weatherview. **2.30** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Close. **6.50 Film:** A Walk in the Sun. (1945) **8.45** Life in a Cottage Garden with Carol Klein. (R) **9.15** A to Z of TV Gardening. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** The Little Paris Kitchen: Cooking with Rachel Khoo. (R) **12.00** EastEnders. (R) **1.55** Coast. **2.10** Natural World: Kangaroo Dundee. (R) **3.10** Natural World: Kangaroo Dundee. (R) **4.10** The Great Comic Relief Bake Off. (R) **5.10** Songs of Praise. **5.45** Ski Sunday.

6.30 Orbit: Earth's Extraordinary Journey. Kate Humble and Helen Czerski follow the earth's journey around the sun from the March equinox to the end of June. Last in the series. (R)

7.30 Open All Hours. Granville tries to persuade Arkwright to buy a van, so he does not have to struggle with the shop's outdated delivery bike. (R)

8.00 Top Gear. Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May pilot three front-engined supercars on a road trip from Las Vegas to Palm Springs via Los Angeles. With drummer Mick Fleetwood.

9.00 Wonders of Life. Professor Brian Cox encounters extraordinary creatures in the US as he investigates how the senses evolved, charting life's journey from single-celled organisms to sentient beings.

10.00 A Night with the Stars. Professor Brian Cox explores challenging concepts in physics. (R)

11.00 Live American Football: Super Bowl XLVII. San Francisco 49ers v Baltimore Ravens (Kick-off 11.30pm).

ITV

6.00 CITV: Handy Manny. **6.10** Handy Manny. **6.25** The Hive. (R) **6.35** The Hive. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.55** Dino Dan. (R) **7.05** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.15** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.30** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.40** Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) **8.05** Rated A for Awesome. **8.15** Rated A for Awesome. **8.30** Big Time Rush. **9.00** The Aquabats Super Show. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** House Guest in the Sun. (R) **10.25** 60 Minute Makeover. (R) **11.25** May the Best House Win Vive la France. (R) **12.25** ITV News; Weather. **12.35** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **1.35** Rosemary & Thyme. (R) **2.35** You've Been Framed! (R) **3.05 Film:** Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. (2001) **5.50** Regional Programme ; Weather.

6.05 ITV News; Weather.

6.15 Dancing on Ice.

7.45 All Star Family Fortunes. With actress Samantha Womack and McFly's Tom Fletcher.

8.30 Dancing on Ice: The Skate Off. The two lowest-scoring contestants perform new routines, with the judges deciding which couple deserves another chance and a place in next week's show.

9.00 Mr Selfridge. Harry hits rock bottom after a confrontation with Rose, who has received a visit from his mistress Ellen Love, while Agnes falls out with Victor when she returns to the store.

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather.

10.15 It'll Be Alright on the Night. Celebrity bloopers with Griff Rhys Jones. (R)

11.15 Anglo-Welsh Cup Rugby Union.

12.10 The Store. **2.15** Monk. (R) **2.55** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.05** Will & Grace. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.05** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.35** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.35** The Simpsons. (R) **2.05 Film:** Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan. (1982) **4.20** Time Team. **5.20** Deal or No Deal.

6.20 Channel 4 News.

6.50 4thought.tv. Alcohol consumption and religion.

6.55 The Political Slot. A day in the life of Conservative Party Chairman Grant Shapps.

7.00 Come Dine with Me. A week of dinner parties in Edinburgh, featuring an around-the-world menu, a "sweetie darling" theme and a stab at some Heston Blumenthal-style cooking.

8.00 The Hotel. Mark wants Christian to become more cost-conscious and gives him a chance to prove himself by asking him to organise a wedding fair and oversee a local couple's nuptials.

9.00 Film: Source Code. (2011) Premiere. A pilot investigates a bombing by having his mind transferred into one of the victims for the last eight minutes of his life. Sci-fi thriller, with Jake Gyllenhaal.

10.50 Film: The Accused. (1988) Oscar-winning drama, starring Jodie Foster.

12.55 Film: Rebound. (2005) Comedy, with Martin Lawrence. **2.20** Smallville. **3.00** Coming Up. (R) **3.30** St Elsewhere. **4.15** Deal or No Deal. (R) **5.10** Countdown. (R) **5.55** Quick Bakes with Eric Lanlard.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowertots. (R) **6.25** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **6.30** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.45** Olive the Ostrich. (R) **6.50** Abby's Flying Fairy School. (R) **7.00** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.20** Animal Antics. (R) **7.30** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.40** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **7.45** City of Friends. (R) **7.55** Little Princess. (R) **8.10** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.20** Mio Mao. (R) **8.25** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.40** Milkshake! Show Songs. (R) **8.45** Rupert Bear. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.25** Little Lodgers. (R) **9.30** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **9.45** Jelly Jamm. **10.00** Power Rangers Samurai. (R) **10.35** Batman: The Brave and the Bold. **11.10** Looney Tunes. (R) **11.20** Once Upon a Time. (R) **12.20 Film:** The Princess Bride. (1987) **2.10** Titanic. (R) **5.25** 5 News Weekend. **5.35 Film:** The Witches. (1990)

7.15 Film: The Time Machine. (2002) Sci-fi adventure, based on the HG Wells novel.

9.00 Person of Interest. The Machine directs Reese and Finch to protect a lawyer who specialises in suing on behalf of convicts who claim they were wrongfully imprisoned.

10.00 Film: Rambo. (2008) Action sequel, directed by and starring Sylvester Stallone.

11.45 Ice Road Truckers. (R)

12.45 How Do They Do It? (R) **1.15** SuperCasino. **4.00** Michaela's Wild Challenge. (R) **4.25** Divine Designs. (R) **4.50** County Secrets. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.15** The Milkshake! Show. (R) **5.40** Thomas & Friends. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes 2011: Not in 3D **7.05** Wallace & Gromit: The Wrong Trousers **7.35 Film:** Superman Returns (2006). **10.00** Being Human **11.00** Family Guy **11.45** American Dad!

BBC Four
7.00 The Story of British Pathe **8.00** Harlots, Housewives & Heroines: A 17th Century History for Girls **9.00** Frank Sinatra: The Voice of the Century – Arena Special **10.35 Film:** The Salt of Life (2011)

ITV2
3.55 Take Me Out – The Gossip **4.40** The Best of You've Been Framed! **5.40 Film:** Back to the Future Part III (1990) **8.00** You've Been Framed! Calendar Special **9.00** The Magaluf Weekender **10.00 Film:** The Bourne Identity (2002)

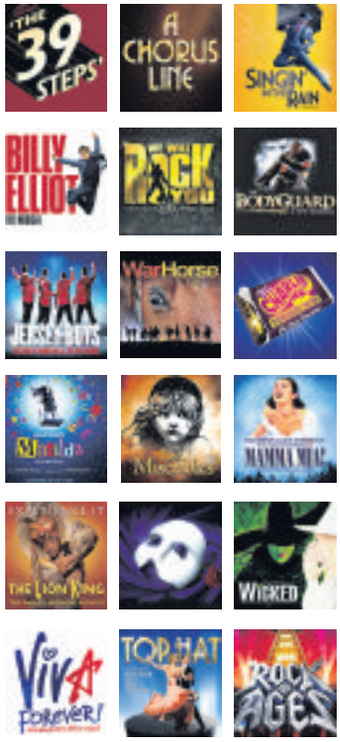
ITV3
3.35 Agatha Christie's Marple **5.45** Murder, She Wrote **6.40** Agatha Christie's Poirot **9.00** David Jason's Greatest Escapes **10.00 Film:** Schindler's List (1993)

ITV4
2.30 Live Africa Cup of Nations. **5.15** Cheers **5.45** Greatest FA Cup Finals **6.00** Live Africa Cup of Nations. **9.00** Anglo-Welsh Cup Rugby Union **10.00 Film:** The Magnificent Seven (1960)

E4
5.00 Revenge **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** New Girl **8.00 Film:** Romancing the Stone (1984) **10.05** What Happens in Kavos **11.05** My Mad Fat Diary

Film4
3.05 Because of Winn-Dixie (2005) **5.10** The Honeymooners (2005) **6.55** Shopgirl (2005) Romantic comedy, starring Claire Danes and Steve Martin. **9.00** Assault on Precinct 13 (2005) **11.10** M*A*S*H (1970)

star extra TRAVEL London Theatre Breaks



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Theatre Weekend from £189.95

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**The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details.*
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Film Choices

MONDAY
The Punisher, Channel 5, 10pm
FBI agent Frank Castle enrages a powerful gangland kingpin when a gunfight accidentally causes the death of the mobster's son. The crime boss retaliates by wiping out Castle's entire family, but the lawman reinvents himself as a vigilante, acting as judge, jury and executioner to the underworld. Thriller based on the Marvel comic-book anti-hero, starring Thomas Jane, John Travolta, Will Patton, Rebecca Romijn and Roy Scheider. (2004)

TUESDAY
Rumble in the Bronx, BBC1, 11.35pm
A Hong Kong cop visits New York to attend the wedding of his uncle, who has just sold his market store to an entrepreneur. The policeman volunteers to stick around to help get the business running, but they soon fall foul of a local biker gang. Martial arts adventure, starring Jackie Chan, Anita Mui, Francoise Yip and Bill Tung. (1995)

The Matrix Reloaded, Thursday, Channel 5, 10pm

WEDNESDAY
Black Death, BBC1, 11.40pm
As the bubonic plague sweeps across medieval Britain, one isolated community seems to be completely unaffected. A naive monk is sent to accompany a band of mercenaries to the village to determine if they have used witchcraft to ward off the disease. Thriller, starring Sean Bean, Eddie Redmayne and Carice van Houten. (2010)

THURSDAY
The Matrix Reloaded, Channel 5, 10pm
As the machines threaten the last refuge of humanity, a party of freedom fighters journeys into the virtual world of the Matrix to find a means to end the war once and for all. However, the computer programme Agent Smith, once a tool of the machines, has returned from the dead with his own plans for the world. Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Keanu Reeves, Carrie-Anne Moss, Laurence Fishburne and Hugo Weaving. (2003)

FRIDAY
Bad Boys II, Channel 5, 9pm
Two mismatched undercover cops set out to halt an underground gang war and bring down a drug lord attempting to flood the market with a deadly form of Ecstasy. However, a romantic interlude threatens to drive the investigation off course. Comedy thriller sequel, starring Will Smith, Martin Lawrence, Gabrielle Union, Jordi Molla and Peter Stormare. (2003)

Pick of the Week

Clunes is in the saddle for his new adventure

Martin Clunes couldn't be less like Gary, his Men Behaving Badly character, if he tried.

While Gary would like nothing more than to be drinking with his mate Tony, Martin would prefer to be on his Dorset farm, hanging out with his wife, producer Philippa Braithwaite, their daughter Emily and his ever-growing menagerie of animals.

Martin is besotted by his furry, four-legged friends. In fact, when he isn't making Doc Martin or some other ITV drama, he can be found surrounded by them, either at home or while making a documentary.

Over the past few years he's featured in various programmes about dogs and lemurs – just last week he narrated another about canines.

Now he's back with a rather more personal project.

This second string to his media career has come as a surprise, but he loves every minute of it: "It was never part of the plan, but I'd really miss presenting and the opportunities it's given me. It would be silly of me to say, 'I won't do that because this might spoil my chances of another acting job,' because I might miss out on one of the biggest experiences of my life."

Two years ago, Martin adopted a couple of young Clydesdale draught horses – called Bruce and Ronnie – and they're now at an age where they're getting a little bored with just trotting around an empty field; their besotted 'father' describes them as "lovable but uncontrollable teenagers."

To give the duo some focus, Martin has brought in Robert Sampson, an equine expert who will turn 'the boys' into useful working horses – he'll coach Martin how to drive them properly too.

"If you'd said 10 years ago that I would be driving a seven and a half ton truck with my own two young Clydesdales and taking them to hoof camp, I'd have laughed in your face," claims Martin. "But it is a reality and it's very exciting."

Much of the programme is dedicated to following the progress of all three novices, but there's also a chance to find out how working horses are employed across the globe, including by the Amish and – in stark contrast – Budweiser in America. However, it's a trip to an Italian vineyard that proves most eye-opening.

"A day working in that Italian vineyard is enough for me to think that having working horses on my farm can only be a good thing," laughs Martin, as he watches the animals driving carts while fertilising the land at the same time.

Then it's back to Blighty to see how Ronnie and Bruce are getting along – and the answer is very well. In fact, Martin's gentle, quiet approach to life seems to suit working with the duo rather well.

"I found this new speed quite shocking to begin with, very slow," he admits. "But I have a six month ban on my driving licence, so this speed could be my future – staring at my horses' bums as they plod me around the countryside.

"It's quite a nice way to go. Three cheers I say."

Martin Clunes – Heavy Horse Power, Thursday, ITV, 9pm

Best of the Rest

MONDAY
Dancing on the Edge
BBC2, 9pm
If there was ever any doubt that writer-director Stephen Poliakoff's name carries a lot of clout, just look at the cast list for his new drama, which stars everyone from Chiwetel Ejiofor and Matthew Goode to John Goodman and Jacqueline Bisset, via Jane Asher and new Doctor Who assistant Jenna Louise Coleman. Perhaps the impressive cast were also attracted by the plot, which follows a black jazz band in 1930s London. Led by Louis Lester (Ejiofor), the group find a champion in music journalist Stanley (Matthew Goode), and some unlikely fans among the upper class. But even with wealthy patrons on their side, they still have to deal with the racial inequalities and shifting moral values of the time.

Richard III: The King in the Car Park
Channel 4, 9pm
It's amazing what you can find in car parks these days; abandoned shopping trolleys, cigarette ends, the skeleton of one history's most infamous monarchs… This documentary looks at the search for the final resting place of Richard III, who was killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485. His body was buried in Greyfriar's Church in Leicester, but in the centuries that followed, the building was demolished and its exact location was lost to history. But all that changed in 2012 when archaeologists finally worked out that Greyfriar's stood on what is now a council car park. Here, we follow the scientists who are trying to establish if the male skeleton found at the site really is Richard III.

TUESDAY
Brain Hospital: Saving Lives
Channel 5, 10pm
As we return to Liverpool's Walton Centre, this inspiring series introduces Martin and Marc who are undergoing brain treatment. Marc suffers from a chronic tremor which became worse during his teens. Surgeons hope that a 'deep brain stimulation' operation will help him control his condition. The engineer has already given up his job and lost the ability to do everyday tasks, so this treatment is crucial. Martin, a university dean and father of three in his fifties who has been diagnosed with cancer is equally optimistic. This operation will hopefully remove the malignant brain tumours, which if left untreated will only spread throughout his body.

WEDNESDAY
Live International Football
ITV, 7pm
The England national team return to action this evening as they face Brazil in a friendly match at Wembley Stadium, organised as part of the FA's 150th anniversary celebrations. England's last outing was a friendly away to Sweden last November, which will be remembered for the performance of Zlatan Ibrahimovich, who scored all of his team's goals in a 4-2 victory, including a spectacular over-head volley from long distance. As with that game, the outcome of tonight's clash is not critical, but Roy Hodgson will appreciate the opportunity to gather his squad together for the first time this year, and see this as a good test against quality opposition before resuming the World Cup qualification campaign.

Holiday Hit Squad
BBC1, 8pm
You wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of Angela Rippon, Helen Skelton or Joe Crowley. They've made their names in tough-talking telly, so throw them all together on the same project and there's every chance they're quite the force to be reckoned with. This new series combines journalism and travel advice to ensure we're fully clued up in making sure our holidays – no matter where in the world we find ourselves – live up to their promise. As Angela joins the professionals who devote their lives to helping British tourists in Majorca, Helen meets unhappy holidaymakers, and Joe joins hotel inspectors in top holiday hotspots to learn about the hidden horrors.

Holiday Hit Squad, Wednesday, BBC1, 8pm

THURSDAY
How to Build a Bionic Man
Channel 4, 9pm
The medical experts featured in this documentary are using £1million-worth of cutting-edge artificial limbs and organs in an attempt to create a bionic man that will then be displayed at London's Science Museum. This summer's Paralympic Games demonstrated how far modern technology has come in its ability to replace body parts and improve abilities, but presenter and psychologist Bertolt Meyer – who has a bionic hand – wants to find out how such technological developments may impact on the human race in the future. Whatever conclusions he draws will be fascinating – but not as intriguing as seeing how the bionic man at the centre of it all turns out.

FRIDAY
Ice Road Truckers
Channel 5, 8pm
It's Friday night, which only means one thing on Channel 5 – a good dose of heavyweight trucking that frankly makes us thankful for our safe-as-houses desk jobs. And for Dave it's not just the conditions through which he drives that are icy. In Prudhoe, he's having trouble making friends with his new colleagues, and when his brakes freeze, he's given little help by his fellow drivers. Things are going a little better for Lisa, though, when she's given the responsibility of driving half of the biggest load of the season so far. Meanwhile Alex Debogorski is given an 800-mile three-day trip to deliver vital food supplies to a remote outpost in Tadoule Lake.

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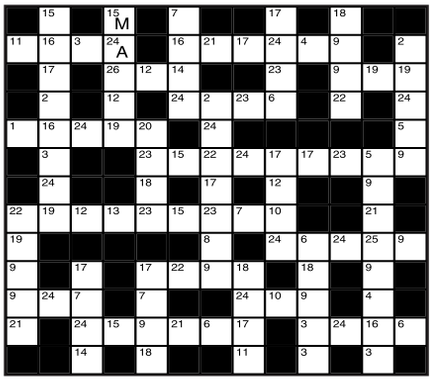
Brain Gym

No.206

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1	14
2	15 M
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24 A
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	U	Y	Q	T	P	Z	V	K	H	X	M	O
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
E	L	W	G	B	J	N	S	D	I	R	F	C

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Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Pacific people would favour this - and I'm master for a change (11)
9. Practise extortion - public instrument for cutting needed! (7)
10. The kind of physical impulse to provide resolution (5)
11. Parts of ships looking smooth and glossy when turned round (5)
12. His room is arranged in North African style (7)
13. Mitigate an outburst of passion (6)
15. Keep on pestering a nocturnal animal (6)
18. If asked his occupation, would he give a stock answer? (7)
20. Andersen named the medicinal plant inside (5)
22 and 23 Ac. Suffering from no heaviness at the core? (5-7)
24. A state in which employment would be out of the question? (11)

Down

2. She's held by their enemies (5)
3. Different traits revealed by eastern performer (7)
4. Guiding principles for the production of machine-guns (6)
5. Just the food to provide a guy with energy (5)
6. Giving patient attention (7)
7. Strictly regulates one's operations, but strives to hold sway (5,2,4)
8. Capture the woman's estates for a European country (11)
14. Is able to cope, but the fellow looks older (7)
16. Don't! It's a ban, maybe (7)
17. Bends the back and vaults! (6)
19. If a man stays here, he mixes with a lot! (5)
21. Records brought up when radio is operating (5)

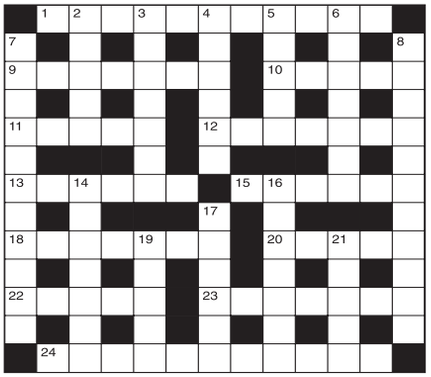
Quick Clues:

Across

1. Book-keeping (11)
9. Ennui (7)
10. Less wet (5)
11. Plant spike (5)
12. Outermost (7)
13. Innumerable (6)
15. Landed property (6)
18. Towing vehicle (7)
20. Forebode (5)
22. Meeting-place (5)
23. Subtle discrimination (7)
24. Fraternity (11)

Down

2. Freight (5)
3. Defining position in series (7)
4. Figure (6)
5. Examine accounts (5)
6. Wild fancy (7)
7. Hindering (11)
8. Liberal (4-7)
14. Coach (7)
16. Trusty (7)
17. Small amount (6)
19. Handle (5)
21. Plaster of Paris (5)



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Straight; 5 Drop; 9 Free; 10 Suborder; 11 Divan; 12 Extract; 13 Undercurrents; 18 Scarcely; 19 Pile; 20 Abridge; 21 Sweep; 22 Tome; 23 Asterisk. Down: 2 Torsion; 3 Average; 4 Housebuilders; 6 Redrawn; 7 Pirates; 8 Mortar; 13 Upstart; 14 Diagram; 15 Recede; 16 Empower; 17 Tillers. QUICK - Across: 1 Spotless; 5 Maim; 9 Acts; 10 Palettes; 11 Comic; 12 Defence; 13 Rough and ready; 18 Solution; 19 Best; 20 Drained; 21 Wagon; 22 Echo; 23 Properly. Down: 2 Piccolo; 3 Testing; 4 Standing order; 6 Antenna; 7 Mastery; 8 Heifer; 13 Residue; 14 Unleash; 15 Hating; 16 Embrace; 17 Despoil.

Sudoku

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

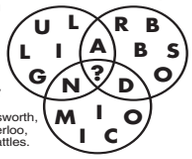
	1	4			3			2
7		3		9			1	
					1			
1	7				6	3		5
	6	2		5		1	8	
4		5					6	7
			5					
	5			7		6		9
8			6			4	5	

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	7	6	8	3	2	1	4	9
1	4	9	7	5	6	3	2	8
3	2	8	4	9	1	6	5	7
7	6	1	9	2	8	4	3	5
8	9	5	6	4	3	2	7	1
4	3	2	5	1	7	8	9	6
6	1	4	3	7	9	5	8	2
2	5	7	1	8	4	9	6	3
9	8	3	2	6	5	7	1	4

Circlegram

Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters within each circle can be arranged to form words on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:
The letter represented by the question mark is R. Bosworth, Flanders, Waterloo, all names of battles.

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St Austell Road in Walsall benefits from a well-positioned location

The kitchen has space for a range cooker and American-style fridge

Covenient location for detached home

A WELL-PRESENTED three bedroom detached house in the sought-after area of Park Hall in Walsall is for sale based on offers around £229,950.

The property, in St Austell Road, is conveniently located for local amenities and schools and benefits from gas central heating and double glazing.

It offers good sized living accommodation including lounge with dining area, fitted kitchen with separate utility, three bedrooms, family bathroom and garage.

On the ground floor the lounge area is 17ft by 11ft 11in.

There is a feature fireplace with inset electric fire, while the dining area measuring 10ft 3in by 8ft 11in has a patio door to the rear garden.

The kitchen, 10ft 7in by 10ft 2in, has a range of wall and base units with roll edge work tops, one and a half bowl sink and drainer with mixer tap and waste disposal unit, gas cooker point with space for range cooker and American style fridge/freezer and door to a utility which is 7ft 4in by 5ft and has plumbing for a washing machine and space for a dryer.

On the first floor are three bedrooms and a bathroom with bath and separate shower cubicle, low level WC and wash basin.

Outside to the front is a lawn with block paved driveway providing of road parking and leading to the garage and side gate to the rear garden which has a paved patio area and lawn with tree and shrub borders.

For further details, or to arrange a viewing people should telephone 01922 627100.

Show home condition of dormer style bungalow

This bungalow in Short Heath, Willenhall, is for sale for offers in the region of £249,995

A THREE-BEDROOM detached dormer bungalow, said to be in show home condition, in Short Heath, Willenhall, is for sale at £249,995.

The Wood Lane Close home has a hallway with feature staircase, a P-shaped conservatory, modern shower room and double bedroom with fitted wardrobes to the ground floor.

On the first floor a large landing area has a walk-in storage cupboard, two double bedrooms with fitted wardrobes and family bathroom with spa bath.

There is gas central heating, uPVC double glazing, detached garage, block paved driveway and mature rear garden.

The lounge, 27ft 6in by 13ft 4in, has a modern feature fireplace with inset gas fire and a kitchen/diner – 25ft 1in by 11ft 6in – has wall, drawer and base units with worktops over.

The central island has cupboards beneath, built-in wine rack and inset one and a half composite sink with mixer tap.

An integrated double oven has a gas hob, space and plumbing for washing machine, integrated dishwasher, space for tall fridge freezer and French door to a conservatory measuring 22ft 1in by 13ft 2in with French doors to the rear garden.

One bedroom is 13ft 5in by 11ft 3in and the shower room has a fitted cubicle, low level WC and pedestal wash hand basin.

On the first floor are two further bedrooms and a bathroom with low level WC, vanity wash hand basin and spa bath.

An extensive blockpaved driveway gives ample off-road parking. Double wrought iron gates lead to the detached garage.

The rear garden has a blockpaved patio and mature shrub borders. Call L&S Prestige Estates on 01902 596006.

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DORA STREET, PLECK

NEW NEW NEW NEW

• Two Bed terrace • C/H & D/G • Two receptions Rooms • downstairs Bathroom • Kitchen • Upstairs W.C.

Offers around £79,950

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GLAISEDALE GROVE, WILLENHALL

• Three bed detached • Gas Ch & Dg • Lounge • Kitchen • Bathroom • Driveway • Garden

NEW NEW NEW NEW £550 PCM

WATERFRONT WAY, TOWN CENTRE

• Two bed • Top Floor • Elec CH & DG • Lounge • Kitchen Area • Bathroom • Suit professional

£495 PCM

CALEDON STREET, PLECK

• Three bed semi • gas CH & DG • Hall • Lounge • Dining Kitchen • Upstairs Bathroom • Garden

NEW NEW NEW NEW £450 PCM

DORA STREET, PLECK

• Two bed terrace • gas CH & DG • 2 Receptions • Kitchen • Bathroom • Upstairs W.C. • Garden

NEW NEW NEW NEW £425 PCM

PARKLANDS GARDENS, BIRM RD

• One bed Flat • Ground Floor • Lounge • Kitchen • Bathroom • Garage • Communal gardens

NEW NEW NEW NEW £415 PCM

FORDBROOK COURT, TOWN CENTRE

• One bed Flat • Town Centre • First Floor • Lounge Area • Kitchen Area • Bathroom

NEW NEW NEW NEW £395 PCM

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A high standard of refurbishment at Brockeridge Close in Willenhall

Call Dixons on 01902 489504 for further details or to arrange a viewing

£300,000 for detached home on a corner plot

A FIVE-BEDROOM, two bathroom, detached home on a corner plot with detached double garage is on the market priced at £300,000.

The house in Brockeridge Close, Willenhall, has been refurbished to an extremely high specification and agents say that viewing is essential.

The property is approached by a blockpaved path with the front garden having a rockery with feature lighting.

On the ground floor the lounge, 14ft 7in by 12ft 10in, has a contemporary style gas fireplace.

The dining room, measuring 12ft 3in by 11ft 10in, has French doors to the rear garden.

There is also a cloakroom with a low level WC and wash hand basin.

In the breakfast kitchen – 19ft 1in by 11ft 9in – there is a range of wall and base units with central island, rolledge worksurfaces.

There is a one and a half sink and drainer with mixer-tap, built-in double oven and gas hob with an extractor over, built-in fridge, freezer and microwave.

French doors are to the side and give access to the rear garden.

The sitting room is 14ft 10in by 9ft 11in.

On the first floor there is a bedroom one with an en-suite with panelled bath with shower over, low level WC and wash hand basin.

There are four further bedrooms and a bathroom with spa-style bath, low level WC and wash hand basin. Outside is a side garden which is paved and gravelled with side access via gates.

The rear garden has decked areas, patio area, gravelled area and is low maintenance with mature shrubs.

There is also a detached double garage which is 18ft 6in by 16ft 4in and with two up and over doors.

People should telephone Dixons on 01902 489 504 for further details or to view.

House has no upward chain

A MUCH-IMPROVED three-bedroom mid terrace property in Sheridan Street, West Bromwich, is for sale priced at £115,000 with no upward chain.

There are two reception rooms, kitchen, downstairs bathroom, three bedrooms, central heating, double glazing and an alarm.

On the ground floor the dining room, 11ft 10in by 11ft 11in, has a feature electric fire and surround while the lounge – 11ft 10in by 11ft 9in – has French doors to the rear garden and stairs off.

The kitchen, 10ft 5in by 6ft, has wall and base units, one and a half bowl sink drainer, work surfaces, gas cooker point with cooker hood over and plumbing for washing machine.

The bathroom has a low level WC, wash hand basin and bath with shower.

There are three first floor bedrooms. The front has a gravelled area and brick path and a rear garden has slabbed patio with borders and shrubs. Call Worton Kelly on 0121 588 5666.

An improved terrace house in Sheridan Street, West Bromwich, is for sale at £115,000

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WS1 1AB

Darlaston
45 King Street
Darlaston
WS10 8DE

Willenhall
22 New Road
Willenhall
WV13 2BG

Five bedrooms and remote control gates

A SUPERBLY-APPOINTED five bedroom, three bathroom home in East Butts Road, Etching Hill, Rugeley, is for sale with a guide price of £435,000.

The property, on the fringe of Cannock Chase, also has three reception rooms, large conservatory, gated driveway and front and rear gardens.

On the ground floor the guest WC has a low level toilet and wash hand basin while the lounge, measuring 18ft 3in by 17ft, has a feature fireplace with gas fire inset.

The dining room – 11ft 1in by 11ft – has patio doors to a conservatory which is 26ft by 16ft 4in maximum and has doors to the patio and gardens.

The kitchen, 14ft 9in by 11ft 10in, has a range of wall and base units with granite work tops, inset sink and drainer and integral appliances including Rangemaster oven.

In the utility room measuring 10ft 3in by 5ft 11in there are wall and base units, work surfaces, space for appliances and door to the garage.

On the first floor a dressing area has a range of mirrored wardrobes, door to an en suite and archway to the master bedroom with a range of fitted furniture.

The refitted en suite has a large corner shower cubicle with water jets, twin wash hand basins and under floor heating.

Bedroom two also has a refitted en-suite with corner shower cubicle, wash hand basin and low-level WC and there are three more bedrooms and a refitted bathroom with freestanding bath, shower cubicle and low level WC.

Outside the property sits behind remote control electric gates with block paved driveway while the rear garden has a large patio area, lawns with shrubbery and a summerhouse.

People should telephonell JR Properties on 01889 580280 for further information.

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FOR SALE

COPPICE OAK, WILLENHALL
Five/Six Bedroom Executive Detached. Comprising Of Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility, Study (Bedroom 6) Five Bedrooms, En-Suite, Family Bathroom, C/Heating D/Glazing, Double Garage, Driveway And Generous Garden. Private Gated Access.
£334,995

FOR SALE

WOOD LANE CLOSE, SHORT HEATH
Superb Three Bedroom Detached Dormer Bungalow Comprising Of Spacious Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Conservatory, Ground Floor Shower Room, Family Bathroom With Jacuzzi Bath C/Heating, D/Glazing, Enclosed Rear Garden And Detached Garage.
£249,995

FOR SALE

COPPICE LANE, WILLENHALL
Extended Four Bed Semi Having Two Reception Rooms, Fitted Kitchen, Utility, Three Bedrooms To The First Floor, Family Bathroom, Loft Bedroom, Garage, UPVC D/Glazing, C/Heating, Garage And Driveway.
£159,995

FOR SALE

ALBION RD, W-HALL
Large Victorian End Terraced Property Having Two Reception Rooms, Breakfast Kitchen With Integrated Appliances, Four Double Bedrooms, Master With En-Suite, Family Bathroom, UPVC D/Glazing, C/Heating, Detached Garage, Enclosed Rear Garden & Driveway.
£149,950

FOR SALE

CANNOCK RD, NEW INVENTION
Extended Four Bed Detached Property Set On A Large Plot, Comprising Of Lounge, Dining Room, Sitting Room, Extended Fitted Kitchen, Groundfloor WC, Four Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, Double Garage, Majority D/Glazing, C/Heating, Vehicle Access To Rear.
£239,995

FOR SALE

MILL LANE, WILLENHALL
Spacious Detached Bungalow Having Entrance Hallway, Conservatory, Fitted Kitchen, Utility, Four Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, Guest Cloakroom, Garage, D/Glazing, C/Heating & Large Driveway
£227,950

FOR SALE

LINDEN LANE, SHORT HEATH
Extended Three Bed Semi Comprising Of Entrance Hallway, Lounge, Extended Dining Room, Extended Fitted Kitchen, Groundfloor W.C, Large Utility/Shower Room, Three Bedrooms And Family Bathroom. D/Glazing C/Heating And Enclosed Rear Garden.
£154,995

FOR SALE

CEDAR PARK RD, NEW INVENTION
Immaculately Presented Three Bed Semi, Spacious Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Conservatory, Three Good Sized Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, Double Glazing, Central Heating Garage/Workshop, Sought After Location Must Be Viewied!
£149,995

FOR SALE

ADA WRIGHTON CLOSE, WILLENHALL
Immaculate Three Bed Link Detached, Hall, Large Through Lounge/Diner, W/C, Fitted Kitchen, Utility, Shower Room, Garage For Storage Only, C/Heating, D/Glazing, Driveway.
£147,995

FOR SALE

JOHN RILEY DRIVE, WILLENHALL
Well Presented Detached Property, Having Lounge, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, Garage And Gardens. The Property Also Benefits From C/Heating and D/Glazing.
£144,995

FOR SALE

WILLENHALL STREET, DARLASTON
Well Presented Four Bedroom Extended Semi, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen/Diner, Conservatory, Utility Area, W.C, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing, C/Heating, Block Paved Driveway, Garage.
£134,995

FOR SALE

BENTLEY MILL LANE, BENTLEY
Extended Three Bed Semi Comprising Of Lounge, Extended Breakfast Kitchen, Groundfloor W.C, Three Bedrooms, Shower Room, C/Heating & D/Glazing, Garage, Workshop. VIEWING ESSENTIAL.
£134,995

FOR SALE

PEACH ROAD, WILLENHALL
Immaculate Two Bed Semi, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Utility, Family Bathroom, Integral Garage, UPVC Double Glazing, Central Heating, Front And Rear. Garden Must View! Canal Access.
£132,000

FOR SALE

BALMORAL DR, NEW INVENTION
Spacious Semi Having Entrance Porch, Entrance Hall, Through Lounge/Diner With Patio Doors Into Conservatory, Fitted Kitchen, Three Generous Bedrooms, Addtional Loft Room, Family Bathroom, C/Heating, D/Glazing, Crete Print Driveway, Popular Location. NO CHAIN
£129,995

FOR SALE

OAK ROAD, WILLENHALL
Well Presented Three Bed Traditional Semi Having Entrance Hallway, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen Diner/Sitting Room, Family Bathroom, Part Double Glazing, Central Heating, Garage And Off Road Parking. Sought After Location. NO CHAIN
£129,995

FOR SALE

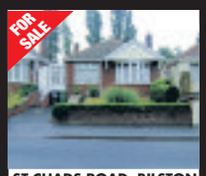
RADSTOCK RD, NEW INVENTION
Two Bed Semi, Having Spacious Lounge, Fitted Kitchen With Breakfast Bar, Two Double Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, Detached Garage, D/Glazing, C/Heating, Off Road Parking, Sought After Location.
£124,995

FOR SALE

STUBBY LANE, WEDNESFIELD
Well Presented Three Bed Traditional Semi, Lounge, Kitchen Diner, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing, C/Heating, Double Length Driveway, Large Rear Garden, Popular Location.
£119,995

FOR SALE

LICHFIELD RD, WEDNESFIELD
Spacious Three Bed Mid-Town House Comprising Of Entrance Porch, Hallway, Lounge, Open Plan Kitchen Diner/Sitting Room, Conservatory, Large Bathroom And Three Good Sized Bedrooms, C/Heating, UPVC D/Glazing
£112,995



FOR SALE

ST CHADS ROAD, BILSTON
Extended Two Bed Detached Bungalow, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Dining/Utility Area, Wet Room, C/Heating, Majority D/Glazing, Off Road Parking, Front And Rear Gardens. Ideal Investment. NO CHAIN.
£112,500

FOR SALE

CHATSWORTH CLOSE, WILLENHALL
Well Presented Modern Two Bed Semi Having Lounge, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Conservatory, Two Bedrooms, Refitted Bathroom With Jacuzzi Bath, Detached Garage, Driveway, UPVC Double Glazing And Gas Central Heating.
£109,995

FOR SALE

HARPER STREET, WILLENHALL
Two Bed Town House Comprising Of Entrance Hall, Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor W/C, Lounge, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Allocated Parking And Enclosed Rear Garden.
£109,995

FOR SALE

CIRCUIT CLOSE, WILLENHALL
Well Presented End Town House, Comprising Of Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Two Spacious Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing, C/Heating And Off Road Parking. Cul-De-Sac Location, Ideal First Time Buy!
£99,995

FOR SALE

BAYNTON ROAD, NEW INVENTION
Three Bed Semi Comprising Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Bathroom, Part D/Glazing, Part C/Heating, Rear Garden, Integral Garage And Off Road Parking. Requires Improvements, Great First Time Buy Or Investment! No Chain!
£95,000

FOR SALE

KENNEDY CRESCENT, DARLASTON
Well Presented Three Bed Semi Having Lounge, Spacious Kitchen/Diner, Ground Floor Bathroom, Three Good Sized Bedroom, First Floor W.C, UPVC D/Glazing, C/Heating And Off Road Parking.
£94,500 ONO

FOR SALE

STROUD AVENUE, WILLENHALL
Two Bedroom End Town House Having Modern Fitted Kitchen, Lounge With Open Plan Staircase, Two Double Bedrooms, Refitted Bathroom, UPVC D/Glazing, C/Heating, Enclosed Rear Garden, Garage In A Separate Block.
£92,500

FOR SALE

SQUIRES GROVE, WILLENHALL
Well Presented Modern First Floor Apartment In This Popular Location, Lounge/Diner, Two Bedrooms, Master With En-Suite, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Family Bathroom, Electric Heating, D/Glazing, Allocated Parking, Must View!
£89,995

FOR SALE

WOOD STREET, WEDNESBURY
Well Presented Two Bed End Town House, Lounge, Spacious Kitchen Diner, Two Good Sized Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing And C/Heating. Fantastic Buy To Let Or First Time Buy! NO CHAIN.
£89,995

FOR SALE

BROADWATERS ROAD, DARLASTON
Three Bed End Town House Comprising Of Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor Bathroom, D/Glazing, Off Road Parking And Rear Garden With Workshop. Ideal Investment Or FTB!
£87,995

FOR SALE

LIME AVENUE, BENTLEY
Three Bed End Town House Having Entrance Porch, Spacious Hallway, Ground Floor W/C, Through Lounge/Diner, Fitted Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Modern Fitted Family Bathroom, Warm Air Heating, UPVC Single Glazed Windows, Front & Rear Gardens. NO CHAIN.
£87,995

FOR SALE

KING EDWARD STREET, DARLASTON
Well Presented Two Bed Mid Terrace, Two Reception Rooms, Extended Kitchen, Ground Floor Bathroom, Two Double Bedrooms, First Floor W.C, UPVC D/Glazing, C/Heating, Private Rear Garden.
£86,000

FOR SALE

WESTERN AVENUE, BENTLEY
Spacious Three Bed Mid-Town House. Comprising Of Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility, Ground Floor WC, Three Bedrooms And Family Bathroom. UPVC Double Glazing And Gas Central Heating, Front And Rear Gardens, Ideal First Time Buy Or Buy To Let!
£84,995

FOR SALE

REGENT ST, WILLENHALL
Well Presented Two Bed End Terraced Property Having Two Reception Rooms, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Separate Utility, Two Double Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing, C/Heating, Cul-De-Sac Location. IDEAL FIRST TIME BUY.
£84,995

FOR SALE

STAFFORD ROAD, DARLASTON
New Build Two Bed Semi, Spacious Lounge/Reception Area, Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor WC, First Floor Family Bathroom, D/Glazing, C/Heating, Off Road Parking, Rear Garden, Ideal First Time Buy, Two Available. Offers In Excess Of £80,000
£80,000 O.I.E.O

FOR SALE

TEMPLE RD, WILLENHALL
Well Presented Two Bedroom Mid Terrace Comprising Of Lounge, Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor WC, First Floor Bathroom, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Front And Rear Gardens
£79,995

FOR SALE

REMINGTON ROAD, BEECHDALE
Spacious Three Bed Mid-Town House, Two Receptions, Fitted Kitchen, Bathroom, Separate WC, D/Glazing, C/Heating, Rear Garden Having Vehicle Access. Ideal Buy To Let Or First Time Buy!
£79,950 ONO

FOR SALE

RYDAL CLOSE, WEDNESFIELD
Well Presented One Bedroom First Floor Maisonette Comprising Of Entrance Hallway/Utility, Dining Area,Lounge, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Double Bedroom And Modern Fitted Bathroom, UPVC D/Glazing, C/Heating, Rear Garden.
£69,995

TO LET

NORTON GREEN LANE, NORTON
Three Bed Detached Bungalow Having Lounge, Fitted Breakfast Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Modern Fitted Bathroom With Whirlpool Bath, D/Glazing, C/Heating, Large Frontage Offering Ample Off Road Parking For Several Vehicles And A Good Sized Rear Garden.
£695 PCM

TO LET

HAWKSWELL DRIVE, HADLEY HEATH
•ADAPTED FOR DISABLED LIVING• Three Bed Semi, Entrance Porch, Hallway, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor Bedroom With Wet Room, Two First Floor Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing, C/Heating, Off Road Parking, Private Rear Garden
£550 PCM

TO LET

SLATER STREET, WILLENHALL
Spacious Three Bedroom Mid Terraced House Comprising Of Entrance Hall, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing, C/Heating And Rear Garden. Close To Local Schools.
£500 PCM

TO LET

YALE ROAD, WILLENHALL
Well Presented Two Bedroom First Floor Flat Comprising Of Secured Communal Entrance, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen With Appliances, Fitted Bathroom,C/Heating And D/Glazing. Great Transport Links.
£495 PCM

TO LET

MILL STREET, WILLENHALL
Spacious Second Floor Two Bed Flat Comprising Of Entrance Hall, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Fitted Bathroom, Two Double Bedrooms, C/Heating & D/Glazing Throughout And Has A Private Car Park. Close To Willenhall Town Centre.
£450 PCM

TO LET

FROBISHER CL, GREAT WYRLEY
Three Bedroom End Town House Comprising Of Kitchen/Diner, Lounge, Family Bathroom, Double Glazing, Part Gas Central Heating, Front And Rear Gardens.
£450 PCM

TO LET

CROFT ST, WILLENHALL
Two Bedroom End Terrace Property Comprising Of Lounge, Spacious Kitchen, Two Good Sized Bedrooms, First Floor Family Bathroom, Double Glazing And Gas Central Heating Close To Willenhall Town Centre.
£450 PCM

TO LET

HART ROAD, WEDNESFIELD
Well Presented Three Bedroomed End Terraced Property Having Two Reception Rooms, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Fitted Bathroom, UPVC Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating And Rear Garden.
£425 PCM

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LOT 1

Flat 2, 131 Glascote Road, Tamworth

Viewings: 1st & 8th February at 11.30am

Situated close to Tamworth town centre this first floor flat has gas central heating and double glazing and would make an ideal investor purchase. Briefly comprising: Communal Entrance, Hallway, Lounge, Kitchen, Bedroom, Bathroom & Utility Area. Enerygy Rating G

GUIDE PRICE £35,000- £45,000

LOT 2

7 Junction Road, Stourbridge

Viewing: Strictly by appointment through Auctioneers.

Recently renovated detached family home situated in a sought after residential area with gas fired central heating and double glazing, the property comprises: Reception Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Guest Cloakroom, Extended Full Width Fitted Breakfast Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Off Street Parking, Fore and Attractive Rear Gardens. Energy Rating D.

GUIDE PRICE £125,000- £135,000

LOT 3

56 Tunnel Street, Bilston

Viewing: Strictly by appointment through Auctioneers

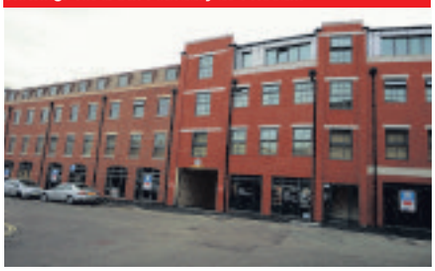
A detached family residence ideal for an investor benefitting gas central heating and double glazing comprising: Reception Hall, Lounge, Extended Dining Room, Kitchen, W.C., Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Detached Garage, Fore and Rear Gardens. Viewing by appointment. Energy Rating D.

GUIDE PRICE £110,000-£130,000

LOT 4

91 Kenyon Forge, Birmingham

Viewing: 1st & 8th February at 11.00am



Top floor one bedroom apartment located in a new development situated in the Jewellery Quarter. Walking distance to St Paul's Square, Snow Hill Station and tram stop. Comprises hallway, open plan kitchen / lounge / dining area, bedroom and bathroom. Early viewing is recommended on this courtyard facing apartment. Energy Rating C.

GUIDE PRICE £60,000- £70,000

LOT 5

4 Relay House, Wednesbury

Viewing: Strictly by appointment through Auctioneers

A prestigious two storey office building, situated on an ideal and convenient corner plot, located at the junction with Upper High Street. Wednesbury is located 6 miles North east of Birmingham City centre and benefits from good road links via the M6 The property lends itself to various redevelopment opportunities, the Ground Floor retail sales suite has A3 Planning Consent (DC/1254868) whilst the First Floor Office Suites having Residential Planning Consent (DC/12/54868) for conversion to 6 Apartments with the addition of a third floor provides a further 4 apartments. Energy Rating G.

GUIDE PRICE £130,000- £150,000

LOT 6

38 Norman Road, Northfield

Viewing: Strictly by appointment through Auctioneers

A particularly spacious traditional property situated in this quiet and highly regarded residential road in need of considerable modernisation but retaining many original features and offering tremendous potential to the discerning purchaser. Having mostly gas central heating and some double glazing, the accommodation includes Vestibule, Impressive Reception Hall with Minton tiled floor, Downstairs W.C., Cellar, Lounge with solid fuel stove and large Veranda off, Dining Room, Breakfast Kitchen, Side Veranda with Outhouses, Three Bedrooms to the first floor and Bathroom, Three Further Bedrooms to the Second Floor, Impressive Rear Garden, Fore Garden with parking. Energy Rating F.

GUIDE PRICE £190,000- £210,000

LOT 7

20 Orchard Grove, Walsall

Viewing: Strictly by appointment through Auctioneers

This traditionally styled semi-detached residence is situated in a quiet cul-de-sac within a short distance of Aldridge village centre. Enjoying the benefit of gas fired central heating and double glazing the property has been extended at ground and second floor levels and now offers spacious living accommodation which would make an ideal purchase for a young family or investor. The accommodation comprises:- Open Plan Lounge Area, Utility, Fitted Kitchen, Conservatory, Downstairs Shower Room/Guest W.C., Games Room/Bedroom Four, Three Bedrooms, Attic Room with En-Suite Shower Room, Fore and Rear Gardens. Energy Rating D.

GUIDE PRICE £150,000- £170,000

LOT 8

92 Kenyon Forge, Birmingham

Viewing: 1st & 8th February at 11.00am

Top floor one bedroom apartment located in a new development situated in the Jewellery Quarter. Walking distance to St Paul's Square, Snow Hill Station and tram stop. Comprises hallway, open plan kitchen / lounge / dining area, bedroom and bathroom. Early viewing is recommended on this courtyard facing apartment. Energy Rating C.

GUIDE PRICE £60,000-£70,000

LOT 9

36 Circuit Close, Willenhall

Viewing: Strictly by appointment through Auctioneers

Purpose built first floor studio flat set in a popular residential development being offered for sale as an investment. Currently let on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy at £250.00 PCM. Energy Rating D.

GUIDE PRICE £20,000-£25,000

LOT 10

33 Daw End, Rushall

Viewing: 2nd & 8th February at 12.30pm

Delightfully situated Victorian end terraced property in need of some improvement and modernisation making an ideal purchase for a first time buyer or investor. Located between Rushall and Aldridge the property comprises: Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Bathroom, Two Bedrooms, Loft Room & Enclosed Rear Garden. Energy Rating F.

GUIDE PRICE £65,000-£75,000

LOT 11

68 Stockwell Road, Handsworth

Viewing: 2nd & 8th February at 11.30am

In need of total modernisation and improvement, this Victorian mid terraced property is situated in a sought after residential area and would make an ideal purchase for a builder or investor, Two Reception Rooms, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Fore and Rear Gardens. Energy Rating E.

GUIDE PRICE £50,000 PLUS

LOT 12

95 Princes Avenue, Walsall

Viewing: Saturday 2nd February at 10.30am

Situated close to Walsall Town Centre in a popular residential area, this traditionally styled semi detached property has gas fired central heating and double glazing and offers scope for further improvement. The property comprises: Porch, Reception Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Breakfast Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Garage, Fore and Rear Gardens. Energy Rating E.

GUIDE PRICE £120,000- £140,000

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DIXONS
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DoingMore...

Brockeridge Close Willenhall

£300,000

A "showhome" style five bedroom, two bathroom detached home situated on a corner plot with detached double garage.

Bell Street Wednesbury

£350,000

A seven bedroom luxury detached property on a sought after development benefitting from four bathrooms and three reception rooms.

New Road Willenhall

£300,000

A five/six bedroom detached residence dating back to the late 1800's having been sympathetically restored and upgraded by its present owners.

Bloxwich Road North

£275,000

A well presented traditional style three bedroom detached residence. Benefitting from planning permission granted to extend.

Sandbeds Road Willenhall

£260,000

An exceptional traditional style four bedroom detached home situated on an exceptional plot with both front and rear access.

Brownshore Lane Essington

£250,000

A four bedroom detached property with semi-rural views of Essington Pools to the front. This property is presented in immaculate order.

Thompson Street Willenhall

£240,000

A "showhome" style four bedroom, two bathroom detached home situated on the extremely sought after and prestigious "Manor" development.

Milestone Way Coppice Farm

£230,000

A well presented five bedroom, two bathroom detached home situated on "Coppice Farm". Having been extensively extended and improved.

Hebden Grove Willenhall

£200,000

A four bedroom detached house with en-suite to master bedroom. Situated on the sought after "Coppice Farm" development.

Broad Lane Essington

£200,000

An extended three bedroom detached home benefitting from exceptional master bedroom with dressing room, en-suite and conservatory.

Banks Street The Manor

£190,000

A "showhome" style traditional four bedroom semi detached home situated on the sought after "Manor" development.

The Green Darlaston

£159,950

A new four bedroom home benefitting from two bathrooms.

Hillbury Drive

£150,000

A "showhome" style two bedroom detached home situated on the popular "Coppice Farm" development. Benefitting from a conservatory.

Walsall Street

£150,000

A recently refurbished two bedroom detached bungalow situated on a sought after road overlooking Brunswick Park in Wednesbury.

Miles Meadow Close

£190,000

A well presented four bedroom detached home situated on the popular "Coppice Farm" development. Benefitting from an extended kitchen.

Spindle Tree Rise Willenhall

£125,000

A three bedroom townhouse situated just off "Stroud Avenue". Benefitting from en-suite to master bedroom and offering a cul-de-sac location.

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www.skitts.net

ROWAN DRIVE, ESSINGTON
ROWAN DRIVE
- Superb four bedroom extended modern detached residence • UPVC double glazed conservatory • Two reception rooms
- En-suite shower room
- Well equipped dining kitchen inc oven and hob
- Substantial 25ft x 16ft garage/outbuilding
- Enclosed low maintenance garden with Koi pool & pergola
- Energy Performance Rating 'D'

NOW £299,950

COPPICE FARM
BUTTERMERE GROVE
- Superb extended five bedroom modern detached property
- Two reception rooms
- Office/occasional bedroom 6
- Conservatory
- Breakfast kitchen
- En-suite shower room
- Excellent fitted bathroom
- Energy Rating C

WAS £289,950, NOW £279,950 OFFERS, VIEWING ESSENTIAL

SHORT HEATH
POOLES LANE
- Much improved three bedroom detached bungalow
- Lounge
- Superb breakfast kitchen, Utility
- Double glazing, gas central heating
- Spacious bathroom • Garage & driveway
- Established rear gardens
- Energy Rating 'E'

£195,000

HIGH ROAD, WILLENHALL
HIGH ROAD
- Spacious four bedroom modern style detached residence • Lounge & dining room • Fitted breakfast kitchen
- En-suite shower room
- Gas central heating
- UPVC double glazed windows
- Block paved driveway
- Energy Efficiency Rating 'C'

NOW £185,000

SUMMER HAYES
FENN RISE
- Spacious link detached bungalow
- Extended to the side elevation
- Three bedrooms & dressing room
- Majority triple glazing, gas central heating
- 32ft double length garage, rear garden
- Energy Rating 'D'

£164,950

NEW INVENTION
GLAMIS ROAD
- Pleasantly appointed link detached property
- Three bedrooms
- Gas central heating, UPVC double glazed windows
- Two reception rooms
- Fitted kitchen
- Bathroom with shower
- 28ft side garage
- Established garden
- Energy Rating 'C'

OFFERS IN EXCESS OF £160,000

CRAB LANE, NEW INVENTION
CRAB LANE
- Dormer style two/three bedroom link detached bungalow • Two reception rooms • Upstairs bathroom with shower fitment
- Gas central heating • Double glazing
- 30ft side garage • Private established rear garden
- Energy Efficiency Rating 'F'

£159,950 OFFERS, NO CHAIN

WILLENHALL
PRINCETHORPE ROAD
- Superbly appointed spacious modern end town house
- Gas central heating, UPVC double glazing
- Three/four bedrooms, two with en-suites
- Lounge/occasional bedroom four
- UPVC double glazed conservatory
- Living room, dining kitchen with Juliet balcony
- Pleasant rear garden
- Energy Rating 'C'

£154,995 OFFERS, VIEWING RECOMMENDED

WILLENHALL
DURSLEY CLOSE, OFF STROUD AVENUE
- Pleasantly appointed detached property
- Potential to extend (subject to Regs)
- Three bedrooms
- Gas central heating
- Majority uPVC double glazing
- uPVC double glazed conservatory
- Double length garage
- Internal viewing essential
- Energy Efficiency Rating 'D'

£149,950

WILLENHALL
LAKESIDE CLOSE
- Pleasantly appointed modern style detached property
- Three bedrooms
- En-suite shower room
- 18ft front lounge
- 18ft fitted dining kitchen
- Gas central heating
- UPVC double glazed windows
- Enclosed rear garden
- Energy Rating 'D'

£149,950 OFFERS

COPPICE FARM
MILES MEADOW CLOSE
- Pleasantly appointed modern style link detached
- Three bedrooms, master with fitted wardrobes
- UPVC double glazing, gas fired central heating
- Lounge and dining room
- Fitted kitchen
- Refitted first floor bathroom
- Enclosed rear garden
- Energy Efficiency Rating 'D'

NOW OFFERS IN EXCESS OF £140,000

Due to the number of properties we have sold subject to contract, we urgently require more properties in the Willenhall Area. If you're thinking of selling or are on the market and having no interest, call Skitts Estate Agents for a Free, No Obligation market appraisal of your home on

01902 631151

SNEYD PARK
CEDAR PARK ROAD
- Pleasantly appointed semi detached property
- Three bedrooms
- Gas central heating, UPVC double glazing
- Lounge and dining rooms
- Fitted kitchen
- Refitted bathroom with white suite
- Garage/carport
- Energy Rating 'D'

£139,950

OFF OVERDALE DRIVE, WALSALL
CONDOVER CLOSE
- Pleasantly appointed semi detached property
- Three bedrooms
- Gas central heating
- UPVC double glazed windows
- Two reception rooms
- Fitted kitchen and utility room/study
- Upstairs bathroom with shower
- Enclosed rear garden
- Energy Rating 'D'

WAS £139,950, NOW £137,500 NO CHAIN

COPPICE FARM
BUTTERMERE GROVE
- Extended end town house
- Four bedrooms
- Gas central heating
- Majority double glazed windows
- Fitted dining kitchen with oven & hob
- Utility room and downstairs wc
- Garage & concrete print driveway
- Energy Rating 'D'

WAS £140,000, NOW £134,000 NO CHAIN

SUMMER HAYES
FARBROOK WAY
- Pleasant semi detached property
- Three bedrooms
- Gas central heating
- Majority UPVC double glazing
- Lounge and fitted kitchen
- Bathroom with shower
- 26ft side garage, off road parking
- Attractive rear garden
- Energy Rating 'D'

£130,000 OFFERS

HADLEY HEATH
CROXLEY GARDENS
- Extended modern style semi detached property
- Popular Hadley Heath location
- Cul-de-sac position
- Three bedrooms
- UPVC double glazed windows
- Lounge and dining kitchen
- Upstairs bathroom with shower
- Garage and off road parking

£125,000 OFFERS

WILLENHALL
BARMOUTH CLOSE
- Pleasant semi detached property
- Three bedrooms
- Gas central heating system
- UPVC double glazed windows
- Two reception rooms
- Fitted kitchen
- Upstairs bathroom
- Front and rear gardens
- Excellent potential to improve
- Energy Performance Rating 'D'

WAS £120,000, NOW £118,500

COPPICE FARM
HIGHMOOR CLOSE
- Modern style semi detached on generous corner plot
- Potential to extend (subject to planning permission)
- Two bedrooms
- Gas central heating
- UPVC double glazing
- Lounge & breakfast kitchen
- Sun room & conservatory
- Energy Rating 'D'

£118,000, VIEWING RECOMMENDED

COPPICE FARM
BUTTERMERE GROVE
- Pleasantly appointed town house style property
- Two bedrooms
- Gas fired central heating
- UPVC double glazing
- Fitted dining kitchen with integrated oven, hob & pantry
- Refitted bathroom with shower over the bath
- Enclosed rear garden with paved patio
- Off road parking
- Energy Performance Rating 'C'

£114,950

WILLENHALL
SHERLOCK CLOSE
- Pleasantly appointed modern style end town house
- Two bedrooms, one with built-in wardrobes
- Gas central heating
- UPVC double glazed windows
- UPVC double glazed conservatory
- Fitted kitchen inc oven and hob
- Rear lounge
- Guest cloakroom with wc
- Rear garden
- Energy Performance Certificate 'D'

£113,000 OFFERS

BENTLEY, WALSALL
CUNNINGHAM ROAD
- Pleasantly appointed extended semi detached property
- Three bedrooms, all with wardrobes
- Gas central heating system
- UPVC double glazed windows
- Spacious 19ft through lounge
- Extended sun room
- Breakfast kitchen/utility room
- Upstairs shower room
- Lovely established rear garden
- Energy Performance Rating 'D'

£110,000 OFFERS, VIEWING RECOMMENDED

WILLENHALL
HILL ROAD
- Much improved extended three bedroom property
- Lounge and extended dining room
- Fitted breakfast kitchen
- Bathroom with shower
- Garage and block paved driveway
- Gas central heating
- UPVC double glazed windows
- Convenient location
- Viewing recommended
- Energy Performance Rating 'E'

WAS £112,500, NOW £109,950

HADLEY HEATH. WILLENHALL
FAWLEY CLOSE
- Pleasant improved modern style semi
- Two bedrooms
- Gas central heating
- UPVC double glazed windows
- Lounge with feature fireplace
- Fitted bathroom with shower
- Carport with double doors to the front
- Attractive enclosed rear garden
- Energy Rating 'C'

£103,000

NEW INVENTION
BEACON ROAD
- Traditional style semi detached property
- Three bedrooms
- Gas central heating
- Refitted dining kitchen inc oven and hob
- Upstairs bathroom with shower
- Front and rear gardens
- Part double glazing
- Popular location
- Viewing recommended
- Energy Performance Rating 'C'

NOW £99,995

WILLENHALL
PACKWOOD CLOSE
- Excellent modern style semi
- Planning permission granted for side extension
- Two bedrooms
- UPVC double glazed windows
- Fitted bathroom with shower
- Pleasant 13ft front lounge
- Enclosed rear garden
- Energy Rating 'D'

OFFERS IN EXCESS OF £96,000

BENTLEY, WALSALL
BADER ROAD
- Pleasant improved semi detached property
- Ideal first time purchase
- Two bedrooms
- Gas central heating
- 'L' shaped refitted dining kitchen
- Refitted bathroom with shower
- UPVC single glazed windows
- Energy Rating 'D'

NOW £95,000 OFFERS, NO CHAIN

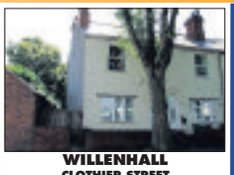
SOLD WITHIN ONE WEEK!

WILLENHALL
FIVE OAKS ROAD
- Semi detached property requiring some modernisation
- Spacious lounge
- Kitchen
- Three bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Garage and driveway
- No chain

£92,000

NEW INVENTION
TAVERNERS CLOSE
- Pleasant one bedroom modern style semi
- En-suite bathroom with shower
- Lounge & separate dining/sun room
- Fitted kitchen inc oven & hob
- Pleasant enclosed rear garden
- Off road parking
- Gas central heating
- UPVC double glazed windows
- Energy Rating 'D'

£87,950 OFFERS



WILLENHALL
CLOTHIER STREET
- Spacious Victorian style end terraced property
- Two bedrooms
- Upstairs bathroom
- Two reception rooms
- Kitchen
- Gas central heating
- Part UPVC double glazed windows
- Ideal first time purchase
- Energy Rating 'E'

£86,000 NO CHAIN

WALSALL
MOORSIDE GARDENS
- Pleasant spacious first floor flat
- Two bedrooms
- Gas central heating, UPVC double glazing
- 14ft lounge
- Well equipped fitted kitchen
- Refitted bathroom with shower & separate wc
- Communal gardens & outside store
- Energy Rating 'C'

£78,950 OFFERS

DARLASTON
PINFOLD STREET
- Lovely one bedroom ground floor flat in convenient location
- Pleasantly appointed accommodation throughout
- Lounge with feature fireplace
- Fitted kitchen
- Fitted shower room with walk-in bath
- Communal gardens and allocated parking
- Gas central heating system
- UPVC double glazed windows
- Internal viewing recommended
- Energy Performance Rating 'D'

£59,995 OFFERS, NO CHAIN

Willenhall
01902 631151

Bloxwich
01922 478104

Wednesfield
01902 732324

Tipton
0121 520 2255

Wednesbury
0121 505 1818

Bilston
01902 353578

Sedgley
01902 686868

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NEW

WILLENHALL
COTSWOLD GROVE

- Ground floor flat in popular location
- Over 55 s development
- Lounge, Kitchen
- One bedroom
- Bathroom
- Double glazing, storage heating
- No chain
- Energy Rating 'E'

£49,950 for 70% shared ownership

WANTED

TWO OR THREE BEDROOM PROPERTIES URGENTLY REQUIRED ON COPPICE FARM UP TO £125,000

NEW

WILLENHALL
BENTLEY LANE

- Superb well appointed five bedroom detached family residence
- Spacious lounge, dining room
- Impressive breakfast kitchen
- Utility & guest wc
- En-suite shower room
- Refitted family shower room
- Refitted family bathroom
- Double glazing, gas central heating
- Pleasant rear garden, driveway
- Energy Rating C

£200,000

NEW

COPPICE FARM
BUTTERMERE GROVE

- Considerably improved modern style end town house
- Two bedrooms
- Gas central heating, UPVC double glazed windows
- Smart fitted kitchen with appliances
- Superb UPVC double glazed conservatory
- Refitted bathroom with corner bath suite & shower
- Block paved driveway affording ample parking
- Potential to extend, subject to planning
- Energy Rating 'D'

£114,950

WANTED

MR AND MRS S REQUIRE A 2/3 BEDROOM BUNGALOW ON SUMMER HAYES UP TO £165,000

REDUCED

WILLENHALL
BILSTON ROAD

- Pleasantly appointed detached property
- Gas central heating, double glazing
- Lounge, Dining room
- Refitted kitchen
- Four bedrooms, three with fitted wardrobes
- Potential to extend to rear (subject to planning)
- Off road parking
- Energy Rating 'E'

WAS £175,000 NOW £169,950

REDUCED

BENTLEY
ATTLEE ROAD

- Semi detached property requiring modernisation
- Two good size bedrooms
- Spacious lounge
- Breakfast kitchen
- Bathroom
- Double glazed windows
- Garden
- Driveway to the fore

WAS £91,000 NOW £85,000

WANTED

NUMEROUS CLIENTS WANTING FOUR BEDROOM DETACHED PROPERTY ON COPPICE FARM UP TO £250,000

REDUCED

COPPICE FARM
LOCHALSH GROVE

- Modern style detached family residence
- Four bedrooms
- En-suite shower room
- Lounge and dining rooms
- Breakfast kitchen and downstairs wc
- Garage and off road parking
- Generous rear garden
- Gas central heating
- Internal viewing recommended
- Energy Performance Rating 'D'

WAS £193,500 NOW OFFERS IN EXCESS OF £189,995

WILLENHALL
GIPSY LANE

- Spacious traditional detached property
- Two reception rooms
- Superb breakfast kitchen/conservatory
- Three bedrooms
- Luxury bathroom
- Large rear gardens with workshop/gym
- Off road parking
- Energy Rating 'D'

WAS £190,000, NOW £185,00 NO CHAIN

WILLEHALL
MILFORD AVENUE

- Much improved three bedroom semi detached property
- Lounge
- Refitted dining kitchen
- Refitted bathroom
- Gas central heating, double glazing
- Driveway, front and rear gardens
- Energy Rating 'C'

£130,000

WANTED

MR J IS LOOKING FOR A TWO BEDROOM PROPERTY IN NEW INVENTION UP TO £90,000

WILLENHALL
PRINCETHORPE ROAD

- Modern End Town House
- Two bedrooms
- Lounge
- Dining Kitchen
- Gas central heating
- Double glazing
- Good size rear garden
- Driveway to the fore
- Energy Rating 'C'

£125,000

NEW INVENTION
BALMORAL DRIVE

- Pleasant three bedroom semi detached property
- Gas central heating
- Majority UPVC double glazing
- Through lounge/dining room
- Refitted kitchen
- Store room/playroom
- Pleasant rear garden with timber decked patio
- Energy rating 'D'

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £125,000

BENTLEY
ATTLEE ROAD

- Extended semi detached property
- Three 1st floor bedrooms
- Ground floor extended bedroom four
- 19ft through lounge
- Downstairs cloakroom with wc
- Fitted kitchen and adjacent lobby
- Pleasant rear garden
- Gas central heating, part UPVC double glazed windows
- Energy Rating 'D'

£125,000

SHORT HEATH
POOLES LANE

- Extended semi detached property
- Three bedrooms
- Gas central heating
- UPVC double glazed windows
- Two reception rooms
- Breakfast kitchen
- Generous rear garden
- Block paved driveway
- Energy Rating 'D'

£120,000 OFFERS, VIEWING RECOMMENDED

WANTED

MR W WANTS A TWO BEDROOM FLAT IN THE STROUD AVENUE AREA UP TO £60,000

WOLVERHAMPTON
ACKLETON GARDENS

- Much improved semi detached bungalow
- Two bedrooms
- Refitted kitchen
- Spacious lounge
- Refitted bathroom
- Off road parking
- Gas central heating, double glazing
- Energy Rating 'D'

WAS £114,950, NOW £109,950 NO CHAIN

BENTLEY
WREXHAM AVENUE

- Extended traditional style semi detached property
- Two reception rooms
- Three bedrooms and bathroom
- Double glazed windows
- Gas central heating
- Garage and driveway
- Views over Bentley Leisure Pavilion
- Energy Rating 'E'

WAS £109,950, NOW £107,000 NO CHAIN

DARLASTON
MEMORY LANE

- Well presented modern style semi detached property
- Lounge
- Dining kitchen
- Refitted bathroom
- Two bedrooms
- Storage heating
- Double glazing
- 23ft garage, garden to the rear
- Energy Rating 'D'

£99,950

WILLENHALL
VICTORIA COURT, GRANVILLE STREET

- Superbly appointed ground floor corner apartment
- Two bedrooms, one with fitted wardrobes
- Open plan lounge/dining kitchen
- Spacious bathroom
- Allocated parking space with security gates
- Double glazing
- Central heating
- Energy Rating 'C'

£87,500 NO CHAIN

WANTED

MISS W WOULD LIKE A 2/3 BEDROOM PROPERTY IN FOREST GATE UP TO £110,000

WILLENHALL
REGENT STREET

- Period end terraced property
- Two reception rooms
- Kitchen and breakfast area/utility
- Two bedrooms, one with attic area
- Bathroom
- Rear garden
- Double glazing, gas central heating
- Energy Rating 'E'

£87,000 NO CHAIN

WILLENHALL
LISTER STREET

- Three bedroom mid terraced property
- Double glazing
- Gas central heating
- Two reception rooms
- Fitted kitchen
- Ground floor bathroom
- Three good size bedrooms
- Pleasant garden to the rear
- Energy Rating 'D'

Was £94,950, NOW £85,000 NO CHAIN

WILLENHALL
GOUGH STREET

- Well maintained & pleasantly appointed semi detached property
- Three bedrooms
- Lounge
- Refitted dining kitchen
- Bathroom
- Double glazing, gas central heating
- Driveway with ample parking
- Large side/rear garden
- Energy Rating 'E'

£85,000 NO CHAIN

WILLENHALL
BILSTON LANE

- Spacious end terraced property
- Two bedrooms
- Gas central heating
- Part UPVC double glazed windows
- Two reception rooms
- Upstairs bathroom with shower
- Fitted kitchen & downstairs wc
- Rear parking and garden
- Energy Rating 'C'

OFFERS OVER £80,000 IDEAL FIRST TIME PURCHASE

WANTED

MR & MRS P WOULD LIKE A 3/4 BEDROOM PROPERTY ON HONEYBOURNE WAY UP TO £200,000

WOLVERHAMPTON
WILLENHALL ROAD

- Mid terraced property
- Lounge and dining room
- Kitchen
- Three good size bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Double glazing
- Gas central heating
- Gardens to front & rear
- Energy Rating 'D'

£77,500 NO CHAIN

COPPICE FARM
COTSWOLD GROVE

- Spacious ground floor flat
- Two double bedrooms
- Large lounge, kitchen
- Parking to the fore
- Storage heating
- DEVELOPMENT FOR THE OVER 55 s
- Communal gardens
- Energy Rating 'D'

£75,000 FOR 70% SHARED OWNERSHIP, NO CHAIN

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Willenhall
01902 631151

Bloxwich
01922 478104

Wednesfield
01902 732324

Tipton
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Wednesbury
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Bilston
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Bloxwich
Vernon Way
- Two/Three Bed Detached Bungalow
- One/Two Reception Rooms
- Fitted Kitchen●Bedroom with En-Suite
- Shower Room●Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating

In the Region of £225,000

Bloxwich
Field road
- Four Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Fully Re-Furbed●Two Reception Rooms
- Re-Fitted Kitchen●Conservatory
- Utility Room/WC●Family Bathroom
- Rear Garden●Garages & Workshop

In the Region of £199,000

Bloxwich
Lytham Grove
- Three Bedroom Detached
- Two Reception Rooms●Fitted Kitchen
- Cloakroom W.C.●En-Suite
- Solid Timber Flooring●Family Bathroom
- Conservatory●Integral Garage

£188,000

Essington
Albany Grove
- Four Bedroom Detached
- Two Reception Rooms
- Extended Kitchen●Conservatory
- Family Bathroom●Front & Rear Gardens
- Carport & Garage●Driveway

In the Region of £180,000

Bloxwich
Selsdon Road
- Three Bedroom Detached
- Two Reception Rooms
- Kitchen●Cloakroom W.C.
- Family Bathroom●Front & Rear Gardens
- Garage & Off Road Parking

In the Region of £175,950

Willenhall
Crab Lane
- Four Bedroom Link-Detached
- Through Lounge/Diner●Kitchen
- Ground Floor Shower Room
- First Floor Shower Room●Utility Room
- Garage & Off Road Parking●Gardens

Offers in excess of £175,000

Willenhall
Longwood Rise
- Four Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge●Kitchen/Diner
- Family Bathroom●Gardens
- D.Glazing & Gas Central Heating
- Driveway & off Road Parking●Garage

£159,950

Walsall
Leamore Lane
- Three Bedroom Town House
- Kitchen/Diner●Study●Cloakroom W.C.
- First Floor Lounge●Family Bathroom
- En-Suite Shower Room●Gardens
- Detached Garage

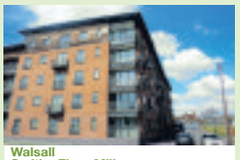
In the Region of 145,000

Bloxwich
Harrison Street
- Victorian Three Bedroom End-Terrace
- Two Reception Rooms
- Fitted Kitchen
- Utility
- Re-Fitted Family Bathroom
- Guest W.C.
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Cellar
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating

In the Region of £139,950

Bloxwich
Well Lane
- Three Bedrom Detached
- Lounge/Diner
- Family Bathroom with separate W.C.
- Integral Garage●Front & Rear Gardens
- Large Driveway

Offers in excess of £130,000



Walsall
Smiths Flour Mill
- Two Bedroom Apartment
- Lounge●Integrated Kitchen
- Electric Heating & Double Glazing
- Allocated Parking
- Family Bathroom

Offers in excess of £125,000

Willenhall
Balmoral Drive
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Through Lounge/Dining Room
- Fitted Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Garage & Off Road Parking
- Gardens
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating

In the Region of £125,000

Bloxwich
Grantown Grove
- Two Bedroom Mid-Terrace
- Kitchen
- Lounge
- Fitted Bathroom
- Rear Enclosed Garden
- Two Allocated Parking Spaces
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating

In the Region of £116,950

Bloxwich
Raymond Close
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge/Diner●Kitchen
- Shower Room●Separate W.C.
- Integral Garage●Front & Rear Gardens
- Off Road Parking

Offers in excess of £115,000

Bloxwich
Beatrice Street
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Front Lounge●Rear Sitting Room
- Breakfast Room/Study●Fitted Kitchen
- Bathroom●D.Glazed/ Central Heating
- Gardens with Off Road Parking

In the Region of £110,000

Bloxwich
Beeches Road
- Two Bedroom Semi Detached
- Lounge●Kitchen/Diner
- Utility●Family Bathroom
- Large Rear Garden●Off Road Parking
- Corner Plot with room to extend

Offers in excess of £105,000

Bloxwich
Henley Close
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge●Extended Kitchen
- Dining Room●Family Bathroom
- Gardens●Garage & Driveway
- Part Gas Central & Double Glazing

Offers in excess of £105,000

Walsall
Parsons Way
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge●Bespoke Fitted Kitchen
- Utility Room●Family Bathroom
- Gardens●D.Glazing & Central Heating
- Large Storage Unit to Rear

In the Region of £99,950

Walsall
Bloxwich Lane
- Three Bedroom Mid-Terrace
- Lounge●Though Kitchen/Diner
- Rear Extension●Bathroom●Garden
- Block Paved Driveway to the Front
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating

In the Region of £95,000

Bloxwich
Bell Tower Close
- Two Bedroom Ground Floor Apartment
- Open Plan Lounge/Diner●Fitted Kitchen
- Family Bathroom●Communal Grounds
- Double Glazed & Gas Central Heating
- Allocated Parking●NO CHAIN

In the Region of £87,500

Willenhall
Squires Grove
- Two Bedroom Ground Floor Apartment
- Lounge●Kitchen●Bathroom
- En-Suite Shower Room
- Double Glazing & Electric Heating
- Allocated Parking●Communal Grounds

In the Region of £85,000

Bloxwich
Bagnall Street
- Three Bedroom Terrace
- Lounge●Kitchen●Guest W.C.
- Bathroom●Conservatory
- Rear Garden
- Block Paved Driveway

In the Region of £85,000

Bloxwich
Pershore Road
- Three Bedroom Mid-Terrace
- Lounge●Dining Room
- Kitchen●Family Bathroom
- Double Glazed●Central Heating
- Rear Garden●Off Road Parking

In the Region of £84,950

Bloxwich
Glastonbury Crescent
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge●Kitchen
- Rear Lobby with Downstairs W.C.
- Family Bathroom●Separate W.C.
- Gardens●Detached Garage to Rear

In the Region of £82,500

Bloxwich
Booth Street
- Extended Three Bedroom Semi
- Lounge & Dining Room●Kitchen
- Garage●Off Road Parking
- Rear Garden●Gas Central Heating
- Part Double Glazing●NO CHAIN

In the Region of £80,000

Walsall
Miner Street
- Two Bedroom Mid-Terrace
- Open Plan Lounge/Dining Room
- Farm House Style Kitchen●Bathroom
- Rear Courtyard●Enclosed Rear Garden
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating

In the Region of £80,000

Willenhall
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Octavia's a big player for Skoda

By Ian Donaldson

If you want to know how important the new Octavia is to Skoda's continuing growth you needed to see the small army of people spending a month in the Portuguese sun.

They were everywhere, helping guide 1,000 motoring writers from around the world to the dining room at the hotel, the conference room, the breakfast room . . . the check-in desk at the airport and the orange juice and cakes at the coffee stop on the test route.

Some of Skoda's support drivers had spent three days ferrying a fleet of big Superb saloons several thousand kilometres from their native Czech Republic to the guaranteed frost-free climes of southern Portugal, to chauffeur writers from airport to hotel for their one-night stays.

Then you discover that 44 in every Skodas built are Octavias and more than 3.7 million have been sold since the first ones arrived in 1996. Skoda's ambitious plans for the years ahead would derail if Octavia sales softened.

The new Skoda Octavia, which arrives in the UK on March 16

So it's no surprise that Octavia mark three, which reaches the UK on March 16, is no mould breaker. Its simply bigger, bolder and better than before; moving the game on without upsetting potential purchasers with anything too radical.

It's based on the same new, and wildly expensive to develop, underpinning seen in the latest VW Golf (and new Audis and Seats too) and comes with a series of petrol and diesel engines aimed at stretching visits to the pumps and cutting nasties from the exhaust, to the benefit of the environment and an owner's wallet.

The new Octavia is 90mm (3.5in) longer than before but, crucially the distance between front and rear wheels is stretched 108mm (4.2in), with the extra space given to rear seat legroom and an ever bigger boot.

The old Octavia is a hit in China, where they like room in the rear. They're going to love the new one, as are UK taxi firms and families with teenage children and masses of luggage.

Skoda long ago stopped fighting for the cheaper end of the car market, concentrating instead on value (the M&S philosophy, you could say) and must have decided there's a big enough jump in quality and design to stand a significant price rise.

That means the new range starts at £15,990 for a 1.2-litre petrol model, a stiff £2,605 rise on before. The car on test, a 1.6 diesel in mid-level SE trim and a likely big seller, has risen £1,740 to £19,240, with the new range-topping 2.0 diesel automatic up a more modest £785 to £23,240.

Standard

Skoda says the entry-level new car has £3,500 of extra equipment as standard, including alloy wheels, DAB radio, extra airbags, remote central locking, touchscreen for the sound system and an eco-boosting stop/start system.

Octavia estates have always been popular and a version is mere months away. Later in the year we'll see the go-faster vRS model make its appearance, promising to be the fastest Octavia yet.

The most economical Octavia yet, also arrives in 2013, with a GreenLine model.

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Kia Sportage shines in crossover market

SOME companies are finding the going a bit tough in the Crossover market but the most recent Sportage is proving just how far Korean giant Kia has come in the UK.

Competition in the crossover sector is extremely fierce and the Sportage has been slowly carving out its own fan base and the arrival of the new KX-4 shows what a practical and smart contender this vehicle really is.

On sale since July in the UK there's a model to suit most pockets ranging from £17,300 to £28,500 and this compact SUV comes with a new diesel engine and higher standard of kit.

Four wheel drive is now standard and the Sportage KX-4 has a new 181bhp diesel engine producing 47bhp more than the former CRDi model.

And if you want to be noticed this might just be the car for you with futuristic styling ensuring you stand out in any company.

And while there's not a great deal of equipment inside this Kia's controls are refreshingly uncomplicated. Standard equipment includes leather upholstery, 18-inch alloy wheels, privacy glass, satellite-navigation. xenon headlights, automatic lights and wipers, panoramic sunroof, dual-zone climate control, heated front and rear seats and a reversing camera.

I'm not a massive fan of the reversing camera system but the Kia system is about as good as it gets. Handling is typical for the crossover sector and there is nothing to say this Kia is better than the opposition.

I find all crossovers a bit too bouncy once you're off the 'A' roads and the KX-4 is no exception.

Seating is comfortable enough in all departments and there's plenty of head and leg room while the driver's seat offers lots of adjustment while the steering wheel is easily adjusted for both reach and rake.

Isofix

Sportage comes with a full array of safety kit. There are front, side and curtain airbags, as well as active front head restraints, along with Isofix child-seat mountings for the outer rear seats.

Stability control and a hill-start system come as standard, too, as does a maximum five-star Euro NCAP crash-test rating.

Deadlocks, an alarm, locking wheelnuts and a visible VIN help to deter thieves.

The range-topping Sportage 'KX-4' boasts clever technology including an engine start/stop button with Smart Entry system, which means searching for your keys is a thing of the past.

There's also Parallel Park Assist System (PPAS) which steers you automatically into a space.

You need the confidence to tackle this but once you have mastered the system it's a dream.

Probably the best Kia I have driven, this Sportage is right up there with the best in class but the range topper may be out of the reach for some pockets.

Good looks with the performance to match sums up the Kia Sportage

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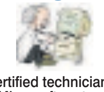
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It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

DSSMOVE.CO.UK the property website where properties say YES to DSS tenants.

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engineering

EXPERIENCED hands on Maintenance Engineer required for initial 6-month contract in Walsall based manufacturer. Knowledge of pneumatics, pumps and electrics would be advantageous. CV's to Barrie.james@intercoat-paints.co.uk by 13.2.2013.

hotel & catering

ALDRIDGE COURT NURSING HOME Requires experienced head chef to provide excellent home coking for 59 residents and manage kitchen department. Working 5 shifts out of 7. Qualifications essential. Please contact Amy Purewal 01922 455731.

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NEED AN EXTRA INCOME £200-£2,000pm. Tel 0121 314 6855. www.bericher.info

NEWSBOYS / GIRLS Wanted for delivering promotional copies of Express & Star in NEWS DELIVERERS
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The Short Heath (WV12-4) area of Walsall,
The Willenhall area (WV12/13)
The Lower Farm and Mossley area of Bloxwich.
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Customer Services on 0800 174 064

sales & marketing

EXPERIENCED SALES PERSON required for successful Powder Coating Company. Applicants will be required to generate new accounts and build on the existing sales portfolio. £25k + Car etc. Applicants by letter and CV only to Dean Shafts, Circuit Coatings Ltd, Marlow Street, Walsall WS2 8AQ.

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pets corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

KITTENS, 2 female, 1 male, 9 weeks old, litter trained, good homes only. 0121 530 1976.

SHIH-TZU PUPPIES, 2 boys, 2 girls, vet checked, wormed, Mom and Dad at home, ready now, £450. 0121 530 0982.

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Walsall Council, Planning and Building Control

The below applications have been made to the Walsall Council.

Applications can be viewed at First Stop Shop, Civic Centre, Walsall or online www.walsall.gov.uk/planning

Representations can be made online, email: planningservices@walsall.gov.uk or in writing to Head of Planning and Building Control, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1DG.

Representations should be made within 21 days of the date of this notice.

Please note: Your letter and personal details will form part of the planning file which is a public document and will be available for inspection at the Council Offices. The information may be released as part of a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE ORDER 2010 (AS AMENDED)

12/1607/FL
Mr Parvis Khan
FOR: Erection of 3 town houses on land between 24 & 32 Cairns Street.
AT: LAND BETWEEN 24 & 32 CAIRNS STREET, WALSALL, WS2 8QT

13/0014/FL
The School Governors
FOR: Installation of 3 access ramps into building, alterations to entrance doors to include new glazed canopy and replacement boundary fencing and gates to northern, western and southern boundaries.
AT: BLUE COAT C OF E (AIDED) JUNIOR SCHOOL, SPRINGHILL ROAD, WALSALL, WS1 2LP

HIGHWAYS AGENCY

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTION 14(1)(A)
THE M54 AND M6 MOTORWAYS (M54 JUNCTION 1 TO M6 JUNCTION 10A)
(TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2013

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Secretary of State for transport has made an order on the M54 Motorway in the County of Staffordshire, to allow bridge inspection work to be carried out.

The effect of the Order will be to close –
1. the eastbound carriageway of the M54 from its junction with the exit slip road at M54 Junction 1 to its junction with the southbound carriageway of the M6 at M6 Junction 10a;
2. the westbound carriageway of the M54 from its junction with the northbound carriageway of the M6 at M6 Junction 10a to its junction with the entry slip road at M54 Junction 1; and
3. the slip road leading to the eastbound carriageway of the M54 at Junction 1.

Work will be carried out over five consecutive nights between 22:00 hours and 06:00 hours and is expected to start on Monday 11 February 2013. The Order will come into force on 4 February 2013.

Vehicles being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes and vehicles being used in connection with the works or by a traffic officer will be exempt from the closures. Diversion routes via the A449, A5 and M6 Junction 12 and visa versa will be well signed.

For further information, please contact Dennis Wheeler on 0121 678 8126.

Mike Lloyd, A Higher Executive Officer in the Highways Agency.

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COLLECT MESSAGES
0906 500 3957
(09065 cost £1.53p/m)

FEMALE looking for some much needed tlc with similar laidback male. Likes nights in/out, socialising, romance etc.

To view these members and others go to: http://dating.expressandstar.com

Charlotte & Ricky

Are this weeks featured web ads

CARING loving, loyal male, seeks younger female for friendship, fun and maybe more.

Guys Text n' Chat. Text in now and chat to local people. Send : CHAT207 To : 65125. Or call 0906 635 0510.

(T&C's below)

SINGLE LADIES

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras. Texts cost £1.50 per message sent.

LIZ 42, black, divorced, seeking male, 44-54 for kind, sincere, honest, open relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400949**

JANINE petite cute female who loves meals in/out, romantic strolls, WLTM interesting appreciative, independent man for ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400803**

JULIE 30's female looking for some much needed tlc with similar laidback male. Likes nights in/out, socialising, romance etc, call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400487**

62YR old female, widowed, small, slim, attractive, kind, outgoing, likes meals out, dancing, holidays, nights in, seeking professional gent. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394106**

KATHY 38yrs, knows what she wants out of life, wltm similar genuine male to wine/dine enjoy travel, share ambitions and hopefully fall in love with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400793**

CHANTELLE 40yr old slim sensual confident female who loves to party, seeking older male for fun dates without complications. Any age/race. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400465**

JACKIE lonely discreet 30's female with many interests, WLTM kind professional male to share nice times with. Status/age/looking unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400451**

GRACE Jones lookalike, black lady, 53, 5ft 11ins, OHAC, WLTM male, 45-65, 6ft plus for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397681**

CAROL 37 attractive slim blonde, curves in all the right places, nice personality, good company, looking for caring fun man for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400263**

CLARE 37 attractive slim with long dark hair and big brown eyes, WLTM genuine male who is honest, sincere and won't waste my time or break my heart. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400199**

TRACY 26, pretty petite brunette, possibly looking for LTR but definitely looking for fun times with outgoing guy. Any age/looks. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397027**

CLARE 38, single mum, curvy hour glass, loves to be tactile, OHAC, WLTM caring male for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399047**

PAULA 37, WLTM male companion for meals out, social drinking, weekends away, hopefully leading to a meaningful friendship with benefits! Any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398503**

MICHELLE 39yr old nurse, slim, petite, blonde, blue eyes, looking to enjoy life with similar romantic, caring guy. Single dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398349**

CAROLINE attractive, kind, caring, 43, seeking kind, caring male for LTR, 45-50. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396837**

NATASHA single professional 39yr old brunette looking for fun and friendship with genuine guy, 30-50yrs. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395719**

TRISH tall slim young/good looking GSOH, professional, solvent, OHAC, affectionate and loves tlc, WLTM male who also likes to be in a loving relationship, 39-50yrs. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397579**

CARING lady, 52, brown hair/eyes, seeks male, 30-60 for socialising, meals out, cinema, music, sports and having a laugh. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392883**

LOVING caring young 68yr old female, 5ft 2ins, slim-medium build, size 12, smoker, seeks slim, well dressed guy with GSOH for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399923**

ANGELA green eyed dark haired feminine lady who enjoys walking and keeping fit, seeking lonely kind gentleman for good times and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399633**

LISA attractive blue eyed brunette, sporty, well maintained 25yr old uni student looking for older male for discreet dates. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399619**

DEBS lonely 40's female with no ties, GSOH, N/S, loves the simple things in life looking for similar soul mate to be happy together with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399523**

HI I'm Sharon an outgoing single mum looking to find love so thought I would give this a go, please don't make me regret it, someone call me pls. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399197**

CARLA 41, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 2ins, loving, seeking male who likes walks, cinema and romantic meals. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396127**

SHARON slim blonde blue eyed outgoing 30's female looking for uncomplicated meets and adult companionship, like what you hear? Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400119**

I'M Heather I love to cook, eat in/out, share a nice flirty glass of large wine or two with good company and am eager to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399715**

NICKY lonely 39yr old single mum looking for adult companionship and strictly no strings fun. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399189**

DEBBIE sexy size 14, fun, outgoing, discreet, looking for fun times only with male over 40yrs, call to find out more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398759**

HI I'm Marilyn a blue eyed beauty. Call me if you have a happy outlook and are seeking some fun. Age/looks unimportant. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395665**

SUE confident professional, sporty/active, seeking sensitive interesting guy for intimate evenings in with great food and conversations. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397485**

CAROLINE 42yrs, slim attractive blonde. Varied interests and solvent. WLTM honest male of any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395675**

PICK AN ADVERT AND MAKE A DATE TODAY!

MARIA French female looking for mutually convenient companionship, very friendly, very discreet and very interested in meeting with you! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397451**

LUCY beautiful big bottomed black female, very tactile, seeks mature honest white male for loving fun times. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397389**

KATHERINE 38, attractive, single, very lonely and looking for love, fun and male companionship. pls get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397123**

HI I'm Natalie 24, pretty, friendly, single, seeking energetic man for romantic walks, cosy nights in and fun-loving relationship. Any age/looks/race. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397489**

TINA young attractive 27yr old single female looking for older friendly loving male for adult fun and good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397563**

BEV 30yr old curvy attractive female, likes music, travel, animals, cosy nights in front of a log fire, looking for affectionate male for good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397535**

MICHELLE attractive 30's female, blonde, leggy and very much single, seeking quality company, hopefully more with nice romantic male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395717**

BUBBLY female, 42, young at heart, honest, caring, likes outdoors, cinema, theatre, meals out, seeks likeminded male/soul mate, 40-50. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 357919**

VICKY honest caring female 33yrs, GSOH, loves meals in/out, travel, cinema, WLTM someone to enjoy nice things in life with and romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 383911**

DENISE tall leggy good looking single mum, easygoing, enjoys nights in/out, animals, WLTM tall male for fun times possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391873**

JENNY blue eyed cuddly independent female, loves countryside, animals, cooking, WLTM older male to spoil and look after. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 378481**

MAUREEN seeks male 32-45 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 323543**

FUN loving lady, outgoing, honest, caring, likes socialising, seeks older male, 50-70. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 383325**

SHAPELY attractive, light skinned black female, 39, seeks attractive, fit, male, 30's, builder type, tanned, rugged for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 231152**

LOUISE 43, 5ft 5ins, medium build, GSOH, kind, caring, honest, genuine, loving, WLTM male, 43-55 with similar qualities for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 376165**

SUSIE gorgeously feminine and sensual, loves lazy summer days, misses male companionship WLTM someone with sense of adventure and lust for life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394117**

KAREN witty female who loves to laugh, WLTM similar male to share interests, romance, cosy nights in and more. Pls call. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393125**

WIDOW 70, genuine, kind, caring, laidback, seeking male for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 387013**

MANDY 36, size 10, looking for relationship with open-minded man. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 360317**

ALICIA 19yr old green eyed female, very attractive, slim, long hair, independent, looking for fun with mature male, no time wasters. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 390059**

I'M Julie 36yrs old, attractive, fit, blonde, solvent with OHAC seeking man to spoil and enjoy good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395051**

EASYGOING down to earth female, likes cooking, exploring new things in life, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 386893**

LADY young 60, outgoing, friendly, smart, likes cinema, shopping, meals out, seeks similar female friends for days out and evenings. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 387117**

PAULINE attractive petite nurse, loves evenings in/out, looking for honest male to share loving friendship and good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 379535**

BLONDE attractive educated lady 50, young minded, seeks professional tall male, 45-55 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391818**

CATHY is a slim attractive lady with an open minded attitude to life, she WLTM a man of any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395657**

61YR old lady 5ft 2ins, medium build, long dark hair, smoker, seeks smart gent who wants to get out and about for good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396409**

SINGLE MEN

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras. Texts cost £1.50 per message sent.

Ladies Text n' Chat. Text in now and chat to local people. Send : CHAT207 To : 65125. (T&C's below).

MALE 50, genuine, honest, many interests, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394232**

MICHAEL 50, nice eyes, seeking female companion for holidays and weekends away, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401479**

STEVE 60, likes sports, meals out, seeks similar female for permanent relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401441**

STEVE single dad, slim, 45, looking for girl who wants fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400257**

RICHARD 48, dark hair, brown eyes, olive skin, WLTM lady, 40-50 for LTR, size unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401431**

ATTRACTIVE tall, Indian professional male, GSOH, easygoing, likes sports, socialising, good company, seeks female with GSOH who enjoys life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401385**

TALL mature, solvent male, seeks to wine and dine younger lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401241**

YOUNG 70's male, widower, own transport, active in business, likes weekends away, seeks honest, caring female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401203**

RICHARD 39, honest, caring, likes cosy nights in/out, seeks lady, 35-40 for good times in and out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401145**

IAN 6ft, likes meals out, weekends away, seeks female, Midlands. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394134**

IAN tall, medium build, brown hair, blue eyes, caring, genuine, loving, tender, happy go lucky, likes music, theatre, meals out, romantic nights in, seeks similar female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401065**

DAVE happy go lucky, sociable, seeks attractive young lady, 35-40 to pamper and cook for. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401043**

NEW Year new start. Romantic white male, 47, 5ft 11ins, likes holidays, keep fit, music, cinema, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401013**

KEITH white male, 49, handsome, 6ft 2ins, seeks buxom black female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394094**

MALE 39, 6ft 2ins, honest, loyal, caring nature, seeks similar female with view to permanent, loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400703**

FRANK tall, distinguished 68yr old mature, professional gent, sensual, tactile, seeks similar, warm, responsive lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400967**

KARL 28, black hair, brown eyes, smart, 5ft 3ins, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400953**

PAUL 52, looking for friendship, possible relationship with someone who can make me happy in 2013. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400849**

MALE 60, 5ft 10ins, loving, caring, seeking genuine female, any age, 40-60 for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400513**

MALE seeking blonde female, 55-60 for discreet adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400435**

COLIN 62, divorced, many interests, GSOH, seeking slim, attractive, 50's female for companionship, maybe LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400389**

MALE 58, good looking, placid, seeks honest, loyal, caring female with view to becoming soul mates. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400313**

MALE fun, outgoing, easy-going, seeking female for good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393346**

COLIN 62, divorced, many interests, GSOH, seeking slim, attractive, 50's female for companionship, maybe LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400389**

GARY 46, loyal, genuine, GSOH, down to earth, seeking attractive lady for relationship. South Shrops/North Herefordshire. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400237**

STEVE 49, fed up, seeking female for fun and friendship, possible LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393218**

57YR old male, good looking, seeking female for fun times and nights in. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397463**

GARY 39, seeks female, 30-50 for LTR and fun. Single mum welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398747**

FRIENDLY guy 49, tall, fit, GSOH, attractive, seeks lady for discreet fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399091**

TAYLOR 50, tall, athletic, GSOH, WLTM female, attractive, curvy for friendship, maybe more, food, communication, evenings out, travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399067**

STEVE 54, attractive, seeks older lady, 55-75 for mutual adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399755**

CARL 40, likes DVDs, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393766**

COVENTRY male, 42, 6ft 1ins, caring, romantic nature, seeks female, single mum welcome, 25-55, any nationality/Foreign for nice times in and out. Genuine replies only. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398671**

BRIAN 60's, intelligent, many interests, loving, affectionate, WLTM West Mids lady for sharing occasional meetings/weekends. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400115**

52YR old single parent, 5ft 11ins, slim, likes most things, walks, nights out, cinema, animals, seeks caring, honest, trustworthy female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400039**

BRIAN 73, fit, N/S, own home, likes walks, cycling, meals out, nights in, holidays, travel, seeks genuine, caring female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399667**

GAY SINGLES

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www.localgaydate.co.uk

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SINGLE mum, bored at home, why not chat to me. **Text JPRES 204464 to 66888**

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Chance still on to join runners

THERE'S still time to enter the Action Heart five-mile run.

It is the 23rd year that the event has taken place and it starts and finishes at Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley.

Runners get under way at 9.30am on Sunday, February 24.

Entry forms can be downloaded at www.actionheartrunning.com

You can also enter online by visiting the website www.runbritain.co.uk and searching for the event.

Action Heart will be offering attractive incentives for sponsorship raised so do get busy with your sponsorship forms.

Anyone collecting £50-plus qualifies for an adidas sweatshirt while bringing in more than £100 lands a pair of adidas running shoes.

Support

Members of the public are advised that there will inevitably be some traffic hold-ups near the hospital as the runners go around the course.

Action Heart would like to say a big thank you to the local community for their continued support.

It's now week five in the training schedule and the programme is now demanding some sustained effort.

However, if you have been building up gradually this will not be a problem.

If it becomes too tough, you can walk the rest of the way rather than give up.

The important thing is to finish each session so that on the race day you can go the distance and complete the five-mile course.

For those beginners who have already entered the run, we hope that you are finding the training schedule useful.

A word of warning to all you runners and joggers out there: Please do remember the importance of warming up those muscles before going out for your run, particularly on cold mornings or evenings.

Training: Week five
Monday: Rest
Tuesday: Two-mile jog
Wednesday: Three-mile run
Thursday: Rest
Friday: Three-mile jog
Saturday: Rest
Sunday: Four-mile jog/run

Does he not like that? Dean Smith reacts to Colchester's second goal

Andy Butler and Jabo Ibehre jump

Paul Downing tries to get the ball from Colchester's Gavin Massey

Saddlers stopped as Us end their slump

Colchester 2 Walsall 0

COLCHESTER ended their club-record slump and halted Walsall's momentum. But the sooner both can reflect and move on the better.

A Colchester classic it was not, and one the Saddlers will be happy to put down as 'one of those' days, ***writes Nick Mashiter.***

But it serves as a useful lesson, both looking forward and back, in the context of Walsall's season.

'We are staying up' chanted the sparse home crowd at the final whistle. That it was the hosts, and not the Saddlers, singing it shows – despite defeat – the strides Walsall have made recently.

It was a reality check for those who felt Walsall were ready to throw off the shackles and for the players it was a gentle reminder, not that they needed it, of what their main priority is this season.

Falling

Their previous fine run of six wins from seven games has given the Saddlers the platform to survive and achieve what was their aim for the campaign.

They will be fine as the squad continues to develop but it does not dampen the levels of frustration from a tepid display in Essex.

Football has a habit of falling to the inevitable and, while there is the benefit of hindsight, you could have almost predicted defeat.

A team who had won every game in 2013 against a side who had lost a club record nine straight matches. It seemed too easy for the pools panel but Colchester were the coupon busters, even if their success was ill-deserved.

There was no issue of complacency; pre-game Dean Smith had drilled into his men the importance of the first goal.

Score first and Colchester would crumble, allow the hosts in front and their belief would be restored.

As it was, Jabo Ibehre's opener 12 minutes from time allowed United to creep out of the bottom four and claim revenge.

Last month Walsall beat Colchester 1-0 to start their revival after a mid-season slump. On Saturday, United followed suit.

It is how Walsall react again. After their last defeat – at Leyton Orient last month – they reeled off four straight wins and Saturday's visit of Oldham is an ideal chance to hit straight back.

Defeat will hurt because of its nature, Colchester were there for the taking and the Saddlers were the better side in a match which lacked quality, if not effort. Ibehre and Freddie Sears' late goals gave the game a lop-sided look just when both teams had seemed they would settle for a point.

Shorn of the suspended Febian Brandy's pace and enterprise, Nicky Featherstone was recalled in an advanced role which failed to pay off.

He began his career as an attacking midfielder but Featherstone was unable to supply the isolated Will Grigg.

Not that it was all his own fault. Paul Downing's poor back pass handed Colchester the opening goal and the underwhelming Saddlers' general lethargy contributed to an uninspiring outing. An instantly forgettable first half was punctured by just two real moments of note.

James Baxendale wasted Walsall's best chance on 42 minutes when he fired wide after Jamie Paterson's fine break had exposed Colchester.

And the Us almost edged ahead when Ibehre beat the on-rushing Ian McLoughlin to a hopeful punt only for Andy Butler to clear his goalbound header. United were happy to contain, to stay in the game as long as they could after a run which had dumped them into the League One drop zone.

And the second half continued in the same vein with plenty of attrition but little action until the final 12 minutes when Colchester broke the deadlock.

It came from a mistake when Sears pounced on Downing's poor back pass and, although McLoughlin saved his shot, the rebound fell to Ibehre who tapped in.

It breathed life into otherwise ordinary Colchester and Sears smacked the bar from 18 yards before clinching the game in the 89th minute. George Porter skipped down the right and crossed for the unmarked ex-West Ham man to sweep in.

Sam Mantom finally drew a serious save out of Sam Walker when he parried his 20-yard effort but there were no late heroics from Walsall.

Paul Downing trudges off at the final whistle as Colchester celebrate

Walsall's Will Grigg hurdles a Gavin Massey challenge

Monmore men get the dates

WOLVES' have a full house of derby matches in the 2013 Elite League speedway fixture schedule.

In the 10-team league, sides meet four clubs home and away once. But they face the other five home and away twice – and included among that number are clashes with Coventry and Birmingham.

Wolves speedway
(Elite League unless stated)

MARCH		
Sun 10	**F Lingren Testimonial**	**H**
Tue 26	**Press and Practice**	**H**
Fri 29	Belle Vue	A
APRIL		
Tue 02	**Belle Vue**	**H**
Sat 06	Eastbourne	A
Mon 08	**Poole**	**H**
Wed 10	Poole	A
Mon 15	**Coventry**	**H**
Mon 22	**Reserved**	**H**
Mon 29	**Eastbourne**	**H**
MAY		
Mon 06	**King's Lynn**	**H**
Fri 10	Coventry	A
Mon 13	**British Final**	**H**
Mon 20	**B Final (re-staging date)**	**H**
Wed 22	Birmingham	A
Mon 27	**Birmingham**	**H**
JUNE		
Mon 03	**Reserved**	**H**
Fri 07	Peterborough	A
Sat 08	Eastbourne	A
Mon 10	**Lakeside**	**H**
Wed 12	King's Lynn	A
Mon 17	**Peterborough**	**H**
Fri 21	Lakeside	A
Mon 24	**Eastbourne**	**H**
JULY		
Mon 01	**Gary Peterson Memorial**	**H**
Mon 08	**Poole**	**H**
Wed 10	Poole	A
Thu 11	Swindon	A
Mon 15	**No meeting (SWC)**	**H**
Mon 22	**Swindon**	**H**
Mon 29	**Coventry**	**H**
AUGUST		
Mon 05	**No meeting**	**H**
Mon 05	Belle Vue	A
Wed 07	Birmingham	A
Fri 09	Coventry	A
Mon 12	**Birmingham**	**H**
Mon 19	**No Meeting**	**H**
Mon 26	**Belle Vue**	**H**
SEPTEMBER		
TBA	**Coventry (Mid Trophy)**	**H**
TBA	Coventry **(Mid Trophy)**	A
OCTOBER		
Tue 15	**Banks's Olympique (Ind)**	**H**

Walsall in good form for leaders

WALSALL RFC resume their Midlands One West campaign on Saturday when they visit Midlands One West leaders Old Halesonians.

Last Saturday's postponed match meant that two players who are returning after injury may benefit from the extra week off.

The Delves Road outfit are currently in mid-table. But a win at Halesowen would move them near the top four. However, the promotion favourites will be aware of Walsall's recent good form.

This weekend will be the start of a busy five-week period as Walsall prepare to play four league games and a Staffordshire Cup semi-final against Lichfield.

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SPORT

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Things don't pan out for Saddlers
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Action Heart training now stepped up
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Andrew just falls short in title fight

ANDREW TUCK fell at the last hurdle despite a valiant bid to claim a West Midlands title in the ABA Schoolboys competition, ***writes Craig Birch.***

The Walsall Wood ABC fighter won his 'box off' on Saturday to progress to a 46kg area decider against Birmingham City ABC's Hakeem Ali Hussain.

But a fresh Ali Hussain was too much to handle in the Class Two section – for boxers born in 1999 – although Tuck still earned plaudits for his effort.

The Shelfield Community Academy pupil, 14, first had to overcome Daniel Stacey, of Queensberry Police ABC, Stoke, which he did with a unanimous points decision.

After Saturday's win he was back at the Donnington Sports & Social Club, Shropshire, next day and punched his heart out for a second bout in a row.

His work lacked the accuracy of his previous fight and that cost the short and stocky 'pocket rocket' the title, again unanimously on points, as he bowed out.

Majority

Club-mates Rory Layton and Morgan Chaplin did not make it past Saturday's first hurdle, but Layton gave European champion Zak Davis a few frights on the way to his exit.

Davis, from Hall Green ABC, Birmingham, eventually took a majority decision at 38kg in Class Three, for boxers born in 1998.

Chaplin was equally up against it and never recovered from a slow start facing Usman Ali, of Eastside ABC, Birmingham, in Class Two at 36kg.

He lost unanimously on points and the same fate befell Frankie Fallows, from Essington Golden Gloves ABC, in Class Three at 60kg.

Fallows is the first fighter to represent the club in competition boxing in its 10-month existence, but lost to Aston ABC's Daniel O'Sullivan on Saturday.

Willenhall Comprehensive pupil Damien Blackburn was halted in the last round in his final when the Wednesbury ABC fighter took a shot bang on the sternum which took all the wind out of him and he failed to recover in time.

The 60kg contest took place in Class One – for boxers born in 2000 – on Sunday. Blackburn, 12, was in with Adam Smith, from Capitol ABC, Coventry, and had fared well in the first two rounds until the fight-ending punch came along.

New champ Gethin prepares for first defence

by Craig Birch

WALSALL'S Martin Gethin is likely to make the first defence of his British boxing lightweight title in April.

Gethin claimed the vacant crown and was saluted as the home-town hero with a ninth-round stoppage of Ben Murphy at Walsall Town Hall recently which was screened live on BoxNation.

And the game Murphy, from Sussex, has now retired after failing to become British champion a second time.

That outcome marked the difference between success and failure – and Gethin has already had proposals for a voluntary defence, to be staged in Birmingham during April, put to him. Anthony Crolla and Derry Mathews – both former British champions – contest the vacant Commonwealth title on March 30, so both are out of the equation.

But now it's Gethin calling the shots. The 29-year-old has set his sights on winning a Lonsdale belt outright – but to do so must defend his championship successfully three times.

He said: "I want to do that and then move on from there. I want to get as much out of boxing as I can and that means more titles, like the European. To have a Lonsdale belt on my mantlepiece for the rest of my life would be special, I wouldn't be able to wait to get up every day and look at it!

"People are starting to recognise me now. When I start to beat the other British title contenders, they will recognise me even more."

Murphy will now walk away from the sport at the age of 32.

His last appearance in the ring saw him show true sportsmanship, despite his obvious disappointment at the result.

Gethin was so elated at winning the British title in front of his friends and family that he did not even notice his opponent's warm applause at the final bell. He said: "I was surprised, I wasn't expecting him to retire, he's beaten some good lads and he gave everything in our fight, he just couldn't break me.

"I always believed I could win but I didn't think it would be by stoppage.

"I knew how strong he was and I had full respect for him and still have as a fighter.

"I didn't actually realise how he reacted until afterwards.

"It was nice of him to clap and congratulate me on my win. He seems a nice man.

"I wish him and his family all the best in the future; I hope he has a good life."

OLD BOY KELLY BACK AS RIGHT-HAND MAN

DAVID KELLY has returned to Walsall after he was appointed new assistant manager by the Saddlers.

The 47-year-old replaces Richard O'Kelly, who joined Bristol City last week, until the end of the season.

Boss Dean Smith wanted a swift appointment and has landed ex-Saddlers striker Kelly, who turned professional with the club in 1983 and scored 80 goals in 190 games.

by Nick Mashiter

He had been out of work since leaving Nottingham Forest as assistant manager in 2011. He had previous spells under Billy Davies at Preston and Derby.

Former Ireland international Kelly said: "I am delighted to come back to the club to help Dean.

"I've seen three or four games this season and I've been really impressed with the style of football that Dean has implemented here.

Clear

"There is plenty of good young talent that has been developed through the ranks and I am really looking forward to the challenge of helping the club progress.

"The supporters here will accept you if you do your best and work hard for the badge.

"It is something that I'd like to think I did as a player and will be doing as assistant manager.

"I've had a good chat with Dean and it's clear that we share the same philosophies on football. I can't wait to get out onto the training field and get started."

Kelly signed from non-league Alvechurch in 1981 and fired the Saddlers to promotion from the second tier in 1988 before moving to West Ham for £600,000 in a then club record sale.

He scored 36 goals in 103 games at Wolves between 1993 and 1995 after signing from Newcastle United. He also played for Sunderland, Tranmere, Sheffield United and Motherwell.

Smith said: "I am really pleased to have 'Ned' on board. He was one of the four names which came into my head straight away upon Richard's departure.

"He's a bubbly character who possesses a lot of coaching experience, knowledge of the game and contacts.

"He's still a well-respected figure at the club for his achievements as a player, and his return is sure to give the supporters a lift," added the manager.

"I've known him since I was an apprentice here and I am looking forward to developing a working relationship with him.

"We both have the same philosophies on the game.

"He won't always agree with me and will get me thinking, which is exactly what you want from an assistant.

"There was plenty of interest in the role, with some very good candidates putting their name forward, but having spoken to 'Ned' for a few hours on Sunday, it was clear that this was the right appointment at this time."

Walsall manager Dean Smith, left, welcomes new assistant manager David Kelly back to the club he served as a player

Grigg tipped to lead line for Northern Ireland

WALSALL chief Dean Smith has tipped red-hot Will Grigg as a leading contender to spearhead the Northern Ireland attack.

The 21-year-old could be set for his second international start in the friendly in Malta next week.

Kyle Lafferty is suspended and Martin Paterson's international future is in doubt leaving Grigg vying for a start with Billy McKay, Jamie Ward and Dean Sheils. Grigg has smashed 10 goals this term – the best haul of his career – and Smith reckons his form will not go unnoticed by Northern Ireland chief Michael O'Neill.

Smith said: "Will's doing himself no harm with what he's doing with us and what he's continuing to do is develop as a player. That's all we want from him. He's grown up, matured into a better player and he looks stronger, quicker and more intelligent as well.

"If that's what happens in the space of 12 months then we're really excited what could happen in the next 12 months. He has done really well."

Grigg has been a regular in the Northern Ireland squad for their 2014 World Cup qualifying campaign.

Shaw is out to pull off a Luton

WALSALL WOOD secretary Bill Shaw today insisted the club are taking inspiration from the FA Cup giant-killings.

Wood host Hanworth Villa in the fourth round of the FA Vase on Saturday having already gone further than ever before in the competition.

They beat Wigan Robin Park 2-0 in the last round and Shaw said the team will draw strength from the FA Cup shocks provided by Luton, Oldham and Leeds.

He said: "Hanworth are a level higher in the pyramid and they should be favourites, but you never know what could happen in the cup competitions – look what happened at the weekend.

"We are playing very well at the moment – for what games we've played – and we've only lost once in the league this season.

"The league is the priority, but who doesn't want to get to Wembley?"

The winners face Rocester or Runcorn Town in the fifth round next Saturday and will bank £2,000 – on top of the £4,800 they have already won.

Hanworth Villa eased past Croydon 2-0 in the last round and beat Dorking 6-0 in the Combined Counties League Premier Division afterwards, but boss Bobby Dawson expects Wood to put up a fight.

"We played very, very well against Dorking but I'm expecting a much, much tougher game against Walsall," he said.

"We'll be fully prepared. We've got everyone (available) and that'll put us up to full strength."

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford. Thursday, January 31, 2013.

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